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RUSSIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS

THE victories of the Red Army have at last made it urgently necessary that two of Russia's northern neighbours should adjust themselves to the fact that she is incomparably the first military Power in Europe. One of them is an ally, the other an enemy, but there is none the less a deplorable similarity in their situations. Catholic Poland and Lutheran Finland have always felt in their dealings with Russia that in culture and outlook they belonged to the West. Both of them felt a possibly snobbish pride in the fact they possessed an older civilisation. Both of them suffered under the oppressions of Tsardom and both developed in resistance to it a tough self-confidence. In neither of them was the ruling class willing to revise its attitude after the Soviet revolution or even to recognise the enhanced power of the new Russia. Both based, and may still be basing, their calculations, in spite of the facts of geography, on the support of distant Powers. Each has now to make a long-range adjustment in its relations. After this war both States will have to live in the shadow of the eastern colossus. To play at power-politics is the most fatal thing they can do. They can hope to preserve their individuality and their autonomy only by adopting a steady and undeviating attitude of friendliness. That, in turn, involves a big change in their internal politics. The old feudal caste in Poland and the propertied fascist element in Finland will have to give way to the democratic forces.

It is, however, the immediate issue that concerns us. In neither case can the adjustment be postponed. If Finland hopes for a tolerable future, she must make up her mind to a prompt capitulation. Her population is divided, and was so far half-hearted in this war that it did little active fighting after it had recovered the territory it lost in 1940. It knows that its situation is precarious, because, apart from its inability to resist a Russian attack in force, it cannot much longer rely on the ability of the Germans to supply it with food. The same difficulty about food will arise for the Allies if Mr. Paasikivi is successful in his peace negotiations. Yet the Finns realise that Russia will not deal with them so long as her arch-enemies, Mr. Tanner and Marshal Mannerheim, retain any vestige of power. Apart from the restoration at least of the 1940 frontiers, we do not know what peace terms the Russians will impose. The immediate situation is curiously similar to that which arose last year in Italy. The Russians will be chiefly concerned to deal with the German troops, at least 100,000 men, who are in occupation of Petsamo and the far north. They will obviously demand freedom to manoeuvre on Finnish territory, and presumably they will expect the collaboration of the Finns in isolating this German garrison and cutting off its supplies. If the Finns meet these demands fully and promptly, they may hope for a rather more lenient peace. They have this asset to their credit—that they can by a prompt surrender shorten the war and lessen the loss of life. It is also obvious that their capitulation will weaken German morale and hasten the surrender of the other satellites of the Axis. But if they hesitate and try to bargain hard, they may provoke the Russians to do what will later be fairly easy—to crush them by an irresistible invasion. The armistice procedure will, we take it, follow the precedent of Italy: Russia will lay down the terms and communicate them to us. The final settlement, however, should in both cases be the common concern of us all, though Russian views will inevitably predominate.

It is urgent to settle the Polish entanglement, for the simple reason that while the Red Army is marching rapidly over what once was Polish soil, the Polish Government in London has not yet instructed its guerillas to collaborate with the Russian forces and partisans. If this inexcusable deadlock continues, we may be confronted in Poland with a situation comparable to that which shocked us in Greece and Yugoslavia, where rival bands of partisans fought each other to the profit of the enemy. On the substance of the matters in dispute the Poles are showing a suicidal lack of common sense. They have not yet accepted the Curzon line as a basis of discussion, and they still refuse to surrender the territory they snatched from the Czechs. This obstinacy of theirs explains the persistence of the Russians in demanding the remodelling of the Polish Government. Accordingly a dilemma confronts us which it will be difficult to resolve. On the one hand, this London Government is behaving with a folly which its Allies cannot defend. On the other hand, what will remain of Polish independence, if a Great Power can dictate the composition of its Government? Unpleasant as the choice may be, the Poles will be wise to make changes with a good grace before it is too late. It may still be possible for the British Government to use its good offices so that the necessary modifications may be made in a way that saves the dignity of Mr. Mikolajezyk's Government. The alternative will be that as the Russians advance into Poland, they will recognise their own *protégés* of the Union of Polish patriots as a rival provisional government. Poland would then be in effect a dependency of Moscow.

The territorial plans which Moscow has in mind have been disclosed, meanwhile, by the *Observer*, as we believe correctly. In order to ensure her naval control of the Baltic, Russia proposes to annex the Eastern districts of East Prussia, including Königsberg. The Poles will be assisted to compensate themselves for their losses in the East by taking as much German territory as they care to claim—the rest of East Prussia, Danzig, Pomerania up to the Oder, German Upper Silesia and possibly Lower Silesia as well. From these nearly solid German provinces it is suggested that the German population (which might mean anything up to eight millions) is to be driven out. In its place the Polish minority from the territory recovered by Russia would be settled. How can such schemes be reconciled with the promise of freedom from want? Transfers of population on such a scale will prove to be technically as difficult as they are morally repugnant. If this plan could be adopted and carried out, it would reinforce the Nazi irreconcilables with millions of uprooted men and women from these provinces. The chance that any pacific and co-operative Germany could ever evolve would be seriously lessened. The publication of such plans must brace the German people to desperate resistance.

On Three Fronts

Mr. Churchill's pugnacious optimism was fully equal to the task of dissipating the needlessly acute anxiety so widely felt about the fate of our troops in the Anzio bridgehead. Coming after a gloomy phrase used by Mr. Roosevelt, the almost hysterical comment of Mr. Mackenzie King had prepared our minds for the worst possible news. As the loss of 4,000 prisoners shows, the position was in fact in some danger, but the guns of the Fleet may have saved it, as they did at Salerno. The real problem is rather to account for the failure to use the effect of surprise, which the landing did achieve, for a dash on Rome. The painful struggle to win Cassino has during the week progressed slowly. Under the plea of military necessity, the unique Benedictine monastery has been shattered by our bombers.

On the Burmese front another ill-conceived raid in the difficult Arakan country has ended in what is evidently a costly disappointment. It seems to have been planned on the lines of a reconnaissance march on the North-West Frontier. Tactics which will serve against Afridis are useless against the Japanese. The Russians, meanwhile, continue to advance. But the well-organised appeals by Seydlitz and other officers of the Moscow Committee to persuade the encircled army to surrender have met with no response. German troops in Russia are slow to believe that they will be well treated if they do surrender.

Spanish Politics

The threat to Franco's oil supplies brought some of the Italian merchant ships from the Balearics, but the warships have so far not been surrendered. Franco, with an effrontery worthy of a better cause, is said to be arguing that the release of these ships would be regarded by the Germans as an act of war; therefore if he releases them he would need a large supply of aviation spirit to enable the Spanish air force to defend the country against the *Luftwaffe*. Reports suggest that he is not accommodating in other ways; according to the Russian press the Blue Legion has been recently reinforced. Large supplies of wolfram are said to be still going to Hitler, and there is no sign that the use of the *Falange Exterior* as an instrument of Axis propaganda in South America is being curtailed. Meanwhile the belief that Franco cannot outlast his greater German master is stimulating democratic activity. No confirmation has arrived of the story of the formation of a Junta of Liberation inside Spain. But in Mexico, a breakaway section of the Republican Left has been formed under Prieto, who has never forgotten or forgiven his split with Negrin during the Spanish war. This movement only represents a small proportion of the "free Spaniards," but it is a thousand pities that Spanish democracy abroad should not have held together under Negrin, its legitimate and clear-sighted leader. Much future trouble could be saved if the Allies would recognise Negrin as the head of a Free Spanish Government. Its title-deeds are more reputable than those of some other governments in emigration.

Oil from Arabia

The American troops who carried the Stars and Stripes into the Mediterranean in November, 1942, were pioneers of a penetration that will endure after the war. That the U.S.A. means to play a big part both in the power-pattern and in the economic development of the Middle East is clear from the plans for the utilisation of Arabian oil which Secretary Ickes has worked out. For a good many years the wells on Balirein, an island under the British flag in the Persian Gulf, have been worked by Americans. But on the Arabian mainland, over a vast area, much of it desert, in the kingdom of Ibn Saud and also at the head of the Gulf under the Sultan of Kuweit (a British *protégé*), stretches an oil-field which is said to contain nearly as much oil as the whole of the United States—say 80 per cent. for a safe estimate. Some wells in Saudi Arabia are already in operation and yielded in 1940 800,000 tons. What is new in this prospect is the decision of the Roosevelt Administration to control and finance the development of this oil-field, much as the British Government participates in the Persian wells. The motive is the same—naval strategy. It is proposed, as a Federal project, to build at the public cost a pipe-line from the Southern coast of the Persian Gulf to some point on the Mediterranean, probably Alexandria. It will be some 1,200 miles long, will cost between £30 and £40 millions and will carry 12 million tons of oil in a year. Refineries will also be erected and some use made of the natural gas. The field will be owned and operated by the Arabian-American Oil Company, which is a subsidiary of Standard Oil of California and the Texas Company. It will be backed by federal credits. In return it is to sell oil to a specified amount to the U.S.A. navy at 25 per cent. below the market price. Details of royalties have still to be worked out with the Arabian princes.

This bold scheme will have to overcome some opposition in the Senate. The odd mixture of public enterprise with private profit does not seem to be criticised. What the Opposition dislikes is the prospect that the American Navy will have to defend the sources of its oil and ensure its carriage from the other Hemisphere. The whole scheme manifestly presupposes a permanent Anglo-American alliance, and is advocated on the ground that America will have to play her part in ensuring the world's peace after the war. In this latter purpose it is easy to recognise the idealism associated with the name of Standard Oil.

American Help for the Jews

Too little attention has been paid in this country to the remarkable steps taken by President Roosevelt to further by direct official action the rescue of Jewish and other victims of Nazi terror. He has created a War Refugees Board, attached to his own office. On it sit the heads of the State Department, Army and Treasury, and—what is much more significant—it has an Executive Director, Mr. John Pehle, an experienced official of high standing. Further, the State Department is to appoint "special attachés with diplomatic status" on the recommendation of the Board, in "places where assistance can be rendered to refugees." This looks like business. The duties of the Board are defined as the inauguration of "effective measures for (*a*) the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, and (*b*) the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims." Side by side with this official agency a powerful "National Committee against Nazi persecution and extermination of the Jews in Europe" has sprung to life: Vice-President Wallace and Mr. Wendell Willkie are among its sponsors. All the signs are that American opinion is reacting sharply against anti-semitism. Our own Government should follow Mr. Roosevelt's example.

Whose Job is Planning?

The newspapers have come out during the past few days with big stories about the road plans which are being worked out by the Ministry of War Transport. The basis, we are told, is to be a twenty-year plan, including grand new motor-ways, duplication of some of the principal main roads, wider cycle-ways, segregation of slow and fast traffic, "sealed" shopping centres, traffic subways, fly-over bridges, control of road advertising—in fact, the entire bag of tricks. We read these intimations of Government planning in a hopeful spirit, until we came to a passage which told us that no final decisions had yet been taken, as the setting of the new road developments must of course depend on what was done about the location of industry. Quite! Then, pray, who in the Government is drawing up the plans for the location of industry? The Board of Trade? Oh, dear, no: the Board's officials do not believe in controlling location: they gave evidence dead against such control to the Barlow Commission. The Ministry of Town and Country Planning? Oh, dear, no: industry is quite outside its terms of reference. Lord Woolton? With his all-purposes staff of five? Oh, dear, no: Lord Woolton's job is co-ordination; and in this matter of the location of industry there is nothing to co-ordinate. Yet, not only for road transport plans, but for every aspect of physical planning, the location of industry is the vital factor. If it is left undealt with everything else goes by default. Precisely! That is why it is being left unplanned.

More Coal Blunders

The apparent peace in the coalfields lasted no more than a few days. The new deadlock over wages is yet another consequence of the absurd system of "dual control" which the Government persists in maintaining. If the Government were in real control of the mines, the wage question would be one for settlement directly between the miners and the Government, and the argument that the owners cannot afford to increase wages simply would not arise. It would be for the Government directly to settle with the miners what the wages should be, and then to meet the cost either by raising the price of coal or, if that were deemed undesirable, by such subsidy as might be required. As matters stand, the owners profess their willingness to raise wages if the Government will either raise the price of coal or foot the bill, whereas the Government thrusts back on the owners the responsibility for settling with the miners what the wages are to be. This is merely absurd; but it is the sort of thing that is bound to happen under "dual control." As for the merits of the case, it is clear that if the Porter award is operated so as to raise the minimum wage only, a good many piece-workers will become, in effect, time-workers, with no incentive to increase output, and in addition relative wage-rates all over the industry will be upset. The Porter award dealt only with the minimum; but a change in the minimum is bound to involve consequential changes in other rates. This the Government is now refusing to admit.

PARLIAMENT: Leave of Absenteeism

Wednesday noon

PARLIAMENTARY representation itself, and the rights, duties, privileges and so forth of Members, have cropped up repeatedly in various debates of late, quite apart from and since the actual debate on Electoral Reform. Should Members go overseas for two or three years without resigning their seats? Shouldn't Members, asked to vote £850 for the expenses of the Parliamentary mission to Newfoundland, be allowed a look at the missionaries' reports? Should the Commons be a hereditary chamber and a lordling be "jockeyed" into it with unseemly haste? Should Ministers be allowed to get away so often with the "not-in-the-public-interest" evasion—particularly when it is suspected that powerful monopolies are being protected?

Back-benchers, in fact, have been up on their hind legs. The House is in restive, uppish mood; the handsome young brow of its Leader is furrowed as bottleneck after bottleneck develops in Business; Whips invoke confusion on the mischievous obstructors.

The best row for weeks blew up on the House of Commons Disqualification (Temporary Provisions) Bill. It was excited not only by the subject-matter of the Bill, which obviously grows less acceptable each year, but by the contemptuous, casual brevity with which the Attorney-General introduced it. Granville and Buchanan kindled a few sparks, Sir Stanley Reed and others applied the bellows, Aneurin Bevan really hotted things up with one of his most extreme and "outrageous" speeches, flinging his arms and his accusations in every direction. Had he been more temperate, he would have got more Members into the lobby with him; on the other hand, he could argue that it was precisely the violence o his attack which concentrated public interest on this matter and forced Eden to carry the debate over to a second day, reply to it fully himself, and at least promise to review the whole position before next year. Those humble, useful creatures the Parliamentary Private Secretaries, who are unpaid, were particularly hurt by Bevan's onslaught on their "corruption": he meant, apparently, free secretarial services, trips abroad and other such "perks," and perhaps expectation of office. Members thought the judgment too harsh; but Bevan is certainly not afraid of fouling even his own front bench.

One point emerging in this debate, and generally thought unsatisfactory, was that Sir Arthur Salter, for instance, is not covered by this Bill, and receives no certificate from the Prime Minister, because his job with U.N.R.R.A. is not "an office of profit under the Crown"; his constituents are none the less effectively deprived of his services for some years on end.

Sandwiched between the halves of the debate came the Newfoundland tussle; no doubt the Government again had hoped that this supplementary estimate would be swift and formal business. The prime obstructor here was Beverley Baxter, whom Mr. Williams, in the Chair, cabined and confined with acute punctiliousness (". . . we cannot so enlarge this Supplementary Estimate . . . as to discuss the whole question of human liberty and things of that kind . . ."); though Maxton was able at some length to offer his services as political lecturer to Newfoundlanders in this country. Emrys-Evans handled the debate stodgily and ineptly, and Attlee had to be sent for to soothe ruffled feelings.

Tom Driberg's Adjournment debate on Lord Hartington's Army leave was an entertaining interlude. There might have been more interruptions if most of the Tories had not already gone home for the week-end; Hinchingbrooke alone remained to defend the impugned aristocracy. Arthur Henderson replied for the War Office with rigid correctness and without committing himself even by implication to the shadow of a hope that the Tory candidate would get in for West Derbyshire. Nor would he say what he thought the Duke of Devonshire had meant by saying that he "had been able to arrange" his son's leave.

What should have been an important debate—that on Lord Woolton's powers—was squeezed into somewhat too short a time. Attlee's explanation of Woolton's minimal machinery was vague, pleasant, and defensive. Shinwell's and Boothby's speeches are worth skimming in Hansard (February 11th).

The Education Bill meanders on. Admiral Sir William James, a dear old cheery with an admirably audible voice, persuaded Butler to promise to make it the duty of local authorities to provide playing-fields. Gallacher recalled that one of his brothers had been drowned in an old clay-pit; Members were shocked from embarrassment to laughter when he added that they would agree that the wrong brother was drowned.

Grigg is growing milder at question-time. Even Pritt and he cooed at each other on Tuesday—Pritt thanking, Grigg apologising. Grigg explained to Bill Brown that realistic gas training was necessary; but made no answer when Brown said, "In view of what the right hon. gentleman has said, would he consider shooting British soldiers to teach them that bullets are lethal?" Stokes was worried about the "merging of minds" of British and American currency experts. Assheton replied: "I cannot say anything about mergings of minds in free countries." Dalton refused to agree that a short-leg utility sock of which some millions of pairs are sold monthly could be described as "practically unsaleable." Captain Alan Graham reported the view of "Royal Academicians and taxpayers" that C.E.M.A. exhibitions were "debasing"; Mrs. Cazalet-Keir indignantly said they were full of uplift.

A good many questions are now being asked about a "prototype prefabricated house." They receive a prototype prefabricated answer.

PONTIFEX MINOR

THE COST OF BALLY-HOO

THE future historian of our times will find ample material in support of the thesis that popular enthusiasm for the war effort had apparently to be maintained by spiritual tonics in which a substantial ingredient was bunkum. Doses of religion as "the opium of the people" being no longer appropriate to the circumstances of the hour, it became necessary or helpful to administer bally-hoo as a sort of mental and moral benzedrine.

Two examples drawn from recent issues of the *Daily Mail* will serve to illustrate this practice. On February 9th, readers were told that General Montgomery had just completed a lightning tour of inspection in a secret, streamlined train to whose journeys "royal priority" had been accorded. Containing quarters for the generalissimo, his staff and 20 picked A.T.S. girls, the train raced through crowded stations; always it was in radio touch with G.H.Q., while documents "too secret for radio transmission" were rushed to it by relays of despatch riders. At halts, while "Monty" inspected his troops, Driver Burford, of Westminster Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire (note here the "human interest" angle) spent hours signing autograph books.

Next day the attention of the *Daily Mail's* readers was drawn to the thrills experienced by charwomen employed at General Eisenhower's Invasion Headquarters. Before engagement, it was reported, these worthy women face days of scrutiny and examination by the British equivalent of the Gestapo; and before a cleaner, mop in hand, can enter a "really important" room, she must push her passport through a slot in the door for inspection by the armed guards within.

> The Second Front charwomen have a theme song—"Pistol-Packing Momma." They sing it every night in chorus, while they battle with the grime which must be routed if the "invasion" brain is to function at peak efficiency.

No doubt there is a factual basis for both these stories. General Montgomery has, of course, been given a special train; and more than normal security precautions are presumably taken at General Eisenhower's headquarters. The point is that, in the manner of their narration, both these stories are pure Hollywood. On the intelligent reader their effect is emetic; space was given to them by the *Daily Mail* on the supposition presumably that public interest in the Second Front "Big Shots" ought to be stimulated, and that readers would respond most readily to childish sagas of secret trains, pistol-packing charwomen and motor-drivers mobbed by autograph-hunters. A sovereign touch of boloney—humble persons like the reader in the very thick of dramatic doings—makes the whole world kin to "Monty" and "Ike."

In these instances the public's response is not expected to lead to positive action, but in another field—that of War Savings—it has been thought advisable to exercise suasion, for an objective in itself commendable, by means of arguments whose fallacy should not deceive a child. The only valid purpose in encouraging savings at a time when Governmental expenditure on war greatly exceeds revenue obtained from taxation is to prevent the inflationary expansion of credit and circulating currency from impinging on necessarily curtailed supplies of unrationed consumer's goods. Unrestrained shopping becomes an anti-social act, whose consequence is bound to be aggravated shortages and soaring prices.

If the Savings Movement confined itself to this rational argument, it would be on firm ground; but its propaganda has, in fact, sacrificed economic sense for the picturesque. It has argued that special merit is acquired by a purchase of interest-bearing War Bonds or Certificates, whereas it is actually more patriotic to forgo interest and keep savings in current account at a bank or, for that matter, in a domestic teapot. During "Warship" and "Wings for Victory" weeks the public has been told that the volume of naval and aircraft construction depends directly on contributions by the Small Saver, though in truth it is conditioned solely by the availability of labour and materials. Regardless of the fact that money to purchase materials and pay wages can be, and is being, created by the Government without limit, the forthcoming "Salute the Soldier" weeks will presumably be based on exhortations to believe that every half-crown subscribed means so many additional bullets for the Second Front.

Is the public so adolescent that it will respond only to childish simplification of rational motives, that its interest can be aroused only by "twopence-coloured" absurdities in the build-up of its heroes? That the dynamic myth has its uses we should not seek to deny. What concerns us is that, by resorting so lavishly to "energising bunkum," those in a position to influence mass opinion are unwittingly (or, it may well be, wittingly) so conditioning their public that it will react only to irrational stimuli; people who are treated like children can easily lose whatever ability they have had to exercise the judgment of adults. A democracy nurtured on nonsense will end by forfeiting the capacity to distinguish between values or apprehend reality. From associating the grim business of the invasion of Europe with choruses by Pistol-Packing Mommas it is a short step, not only to voting for a ducal candidate because his agent rides a cob sired by a Derby winner, but also to giving up the hope of rational democracy in favour of government by the artful cynicism of the mass advertiser.

LETTER TO A SOLDIER

[The following is a reply to a letter from a young officer on active service.]

DEAR Jack,

I didn't know so much would go on to an air-graph. It was a help to know the sort of questions you are asking yourselves. You say that, apart from wanting to defeat the enemy as quickly as possible, you are in the dark about everything. The newspapers and wireless seem all propaganda. You discuss "post-war," how to "prevent the next," and how far Germany ought to be "punished." You have your doubts about the unity of the United Nations, and feel that politicians (whom you rather rashly lump together) are not getting on with the job of seeing that the world is a better place to live in after the war. (Why did anyone ever suggest that the process of killing a few million people, burning cities, and half-starving those who escape the bombs is likely to make the world better?) You are distressed by the misery of the Italian people you have liberated, and doubt if the Censor would pass your views of Amgot. You add that in intimate conversation you find that none of you hates anyone particularly, that you all loathe having to fight, and you feel that the ideas you were brought up to believe in, the picture of the world painted for you by your parents and teachers, has proved not exactly false, but just wildly irrelevant. You seem to think that I and people like me ought to be able to do something about it.

Well, it makes little difference where I begin. In a tangle of this kind you start pulling out one thread, only to find that they are all joined together and that one question leads on to the next. In a war so much has to be subordinated to unity that all propaganda is always dangerously over-simplified and dramatised. The complications and the long-distance considerations that are in the minds of rulers are not explained to the general public, which, in fact, would be seriously divided about the real aims of their leaders. At the end of a war this division between the informed opinion of a small minority, which wants to keep power, and the dramatic picture painted for the general public may have devastating and irreparable results. Look what happened at the end of the last war. Some of the principal actors have been quite frank about it since. Lloyd George and Winston Churchill have both let the cat out of the bag about 1918. In *Aftermath* Mr. Churchill tells us that on Armistice night his mind was "divided between anxiety for the future and desire to help the fallen foe." He and Lloyd George both knew that the real job before them had nothing to do with hanging the Kaiser, and that if "making Germany pay" meant what the public were encouraged to believe it meant, the results would be disastrous for us as well as for the Germans. Yet, Mr. Churchill explains, they both responded to the popular clamour and talked nonsense because they wanted to win the election.

As a result of their failure to be honest about reparations and the rest of it, the economic morass was made so deep that our capitalists were never able to climb out of it. An effort was made to provide a better political machinery by setting up the League of Nations, but without economic foundations, without any real basis of unity, no political and juridical organisation could do the job. Someone must start telling the truth this time before our public men are caught up in a whirlwind of electoral slogans. The public found them out within a few years after the last peace. But the chance of starting the post-war period based on a sane foundation was lost, and the reaction to a sort of semi-isolationist escapism (not the same thing as pacifism), which affected all parties, was as unhelpful as the simple folly of trying to found peace on the punishment of war criminals and making the enemy pay for the war. Politicians would have found that it paid them and the world much better if they had said what was really in their minds from the first.

Don't worry your head about the punishment of Germany. Germany will be punished inevitably; bombs, the fury of the Russians, Poles and other tortured peoples, occupation by victorious armies, internal convulsions and revolution—all these will punish Hitler's Reich and make Germany harmless after the war. Arguments about whether Germans are all bad or some good, or whether they are best reconciled by kindness, or made impotent by a Carthaginian peace are all irrelevant, since it will be impossible this time quickly to reconcile Germans with their neighbours, and equally impossible to destroy a nation of seventy million people. Whether any of the surviving Germans ever again become dangerous to other Europeans depends not on the degree of suffering we inflict on Germany after the war, but on the sort of place we make of Europe, and on the relation of the victorious Powers to each other.

Germany was completely helpless and disarmed in 1919, and when she did rearm, the Allied Governments were perfectly well aware of the fact. It is often said that she was allowed to rearm by the sentimentality of Britain and the United States, where people had a bad conscience about Versailles. There is only a very little truth in this. Germany was rearmed in the ordinary way of business by British and American firms, which found her a good market. She bought her raw materials from America, from us and from the Dominions. Not sentiment, free enterprise. British policy generally approved of their rearmament. First the Foreign Office wanted to restore the balance of power in Europe, since they regarded France and her Eastern European allies as too strong. In the later stages Hitler succeeded in persuading the British and French that he intended to attack in the East and leave them alone; he was allowed to rearm against Bolshevism. Secrecy had nothing to do with the matter. Government experts knew all about German rearmament long before Winston Churchill and other people started telling the facts to the public (who didn't want to listen); in point of fact, Germany was quite helpless to fight a war against the Allies until after the occupation of the Rhineland in 1936.

You see what I mean by saying that the important thing is not the destruction of Germany, but the relation of the Allies. Supposing, for instance, that this time the Allies really cut Germany into bits and kill all the Germans who could make war again. (Last time the Allies deliberately prevented the revolution in Germany, and kept the industrialists and Junkers and military caste intact, because these people were their natural allies against Bolshevism.) Supposing, in a word, that Germany is this time reduced to the complete impotence of a half-starved agricultural country with her heavy industry, which is a real source of danger, taken over by the victors. What then? Have we made war impossible or even unlikely? If Britain and America are hostile to the Soviet Union, which, in spite of the present alliance, is obviously probable without some much more secure working arrangement than we have at present, then in a few years' time our capitalists will be rebuilding the industry of the Ruhr and the Rhine for their coming war with the Russians, who at the same time will be developing the war potential of Silesia and Eastern Europe for a war they would regard as inevitable. There is no solution this way; what matters is not the country to which the resources of Europe belong, but the use to which they are put.

The picture of the future I have forecast is likely enough as things are going now. In that case the newspapers would again have forgotten all about the German danger quite soon after the war, as they did last time. For several years after the last war the newspaper which most wanted to starve all Hun babies, printed a heading in every issue of its paper: "They will have you yet, those Junkers." It so far justified its own prophecy that a few years later it was telling us that Hitler was the saviour of Europe against Bolshevism, praising his way of reorganising Germany, and urging us all to learn German and chum up with the Nazi youth! Once again propaganda would switch over from the wicked Germans to the wicked Bolsheviks. You are quite right in suspecting that much of what you now read and hear is blarney.

The problem of Germany, you see, cannot be isolated from that of Europe, or, indeed, from that of the world as a whole. At the end of this war Europe will be in an almost unimaginable chaos. Hunger, disease and the vast confusion of populations (about 30 million people have been shifted from their homes by Hitler's war) and the physical destruction of cities and the devastation of large areas, together these will create a problem and a danger which can be made worse, but not better, by a sentimental and vindictive peace. The whole world, including England, will be in danger of sheer disintegration; and there is no way of inflicting further injury on one country without increasing our own danger. Our rulers are quite conscious of this; it depends very much on you and me whether they talk about these realities or about hanging Hitler and other trivialities at the end of the war.

Mr. Churchill, on returning from the meeting with Mr. Roosevelt, in which the Atlantic Charter was signed, broadcast with admirable prudence that this time we intended thoroughly to disarm Germany, but not to impoverish her. It was a sensible promise which, as victory has looked more certain, has been too seldom repeated by politicians. Once again I see the danger of a political peace which forgets the economic realities. The trouble about Versailles was not the frontier settlement, nor that it was too lenient or too harsh to the Germans. It just forgot, as we learnt in twenty years of uneasy peace and a few months of swift German conquest, that Europe cannot live as a bundle of small States, arming against each other on frontiers which a modern air force scarcely notices, building up exclusive economic systems behind tariff barriers and reducing its population to unemployment, want and political idiocy by national policies in a world which any child can see must be internationally organised. In a word Versailles forgot, and we are again in danger of forgetting, that there are 350 million or so people in Europe whose primary needs are security and an improving standard of living. They want freedom, too, but that does not mean very much unless Europe as a whole is socially and economically a going concern.

Well, I must leave the further implications for another letter. It follows from what I have said that the first need is for the Allies to have a common policy after the war; if they quarrel we shall be back at an international anarchy that will lead quite quickly to a worse war, whether Germany has been pulverised or not. It follows that this joint policy must include not only political machinery that alone must break down at the first strain, but also a programme of rebuilding for the whole of Europe (for the moment I am leaving aside Asia's similar and no less difficult problems). This programme will have to include within its scope the defeated nations (after they've been through revolutionary upheavals), because you can't have part of Europe fed and part starving. If you can accept these basic propositions you will find that there is quite a lot to believe in and work for.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

TO THE FINNISH

[*Reflections on the invitation to the Finns to attend the I.L.O. Convention in America.*]

When for their sins the favoured Finns became
  the hated foe
Some lurking Grace retained their race within
  the I.L.O.
And, though our praise in former days did not *our*
  wrath diminish,
The U.S.A. declined to play at fighting to the
  Finnish.

The problem now is when and how the I.L.O.
  Convention
Can ask the Russ to meet with us, without a Finn
  abstention;
For if the Finn is to be *in* by right of invitation
Without a doubt some will be *out* of this delibera-
  tion.

And it may be that we shall see some rival
  constitutions
Where Russian chaps will meet with Japs to draw
  up resolutions;
No matter which Mihailovitch, Tito will go t
  t'other,
Rifting the lutes with old disputes which we hav
  sought to smother.

Then, if De Gaulle is on the whole inclined t
  either faction,
Contrariwise in Giraud's eyes will lie the line o
  action ;
Whoever speaks for half the Greeks will merel
  split the nation
And only Poles will save their souls by frig
  isolation.

REGINALD REYNOLDS

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

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A LONDON DIARY

I SEE it is denied that the Cavendish family arranged the West Derbyshire election, so I suppose it must have been Beachcomber. Who else could have invented a candidate who is first misquoted as saying that he didn't want votes but only sympathy, and then explains that he really said he did not like "Notes—pound notes." (I presume he is a currency reformer, but the press has not made that clear.) And then there is the delicious irony in the succession of the two Cavendish candidates. Here is one M.P., who married into the Cavendish family and who resigns their traditional seat on the ground that he cannot carry out his military duties and also represent the constituency properly. When, after the War Office wheels have moved with remarkable facility, the present Lord Hartington returns hot foot from his military duties to take up his Parliamentary heritage, he innocently explains that his intention is to return to active service and only enter into politics when the war is over! Judging from reports of the election he is a very nice young man, but (if one can say such a thing about a Cavendish) somewhat naïve about politics. I like the simple honesty of a reply he is alleged to have given to a question on agricultural policy. He knew, the report runs, that there were two important questions about agriculture, one was about wages and the other he'd forgotten. Mr. Churchill's letter of recommendation was based on the great services of the Cavendish family since 1688. The Prime Minister becomes every day more eighteenth century in his attitude to the House of Commons, and this election is just like one of those historic fights that took place before the first Reform Bill, when the great families were challenged by independent candidates who rallied such local electors as had the courage to support a national cause instead of a family connection.

* * *

New light is thrown on the anti-Nazi and potentially revolutionary sentiment of the German soldiers and workers by this report on French-German collaboration which appeared in a Liberal Swiss paper, *St. Galler Tagblatt* (February 2nd, 1944). The author is a French officer who is a member of the French resistance movement and who was for three years a prisoner in Germany.

> ". . . French resistance in Germany is perhaps better and more tightly organised than in France. Two million prisoners of war and almost two million civil workers constitute the pillars on which the French resistance movement in Germany is based. In order to prevent our work and our efforts from being isolated, and remaining, so to speak, in a vacuum, we had to make a permanent liaison with the home country. The task before us was complicated and difficult. It was necessary to form a liaison between the various camps, with the civil workers, with the home country and with Algiers. This would naturally have been impossible if we had not been able to count on the active help of German soldiers and workers. We left many good friends behind among the Germans when, one summer night, we cut the barbed wire. . . .
>
> The return home was quite different from what we had expected. Over the small town which we first entered there lay an oppressive silence, apparently full of hatred and rage. We soon realised the great difference there was in the attitude of, say, prisoners of war and the people at home towards the Germans. We saw the Germans in their own homes with all their daily sufferings, their weaknesses and their fear for the future. But in France people see them only as the ruthless invader, the cruel occupying power, and in the imagination of the average Frenchman the German is the equivalent of the Gestapo. Whereas our hatred is much more directed against the collaborationists, profiteers and the like, the hatred of the Frenchman at home is concentrated upon the occupant . . .

* * *

The International Brigade held a meeting last Sunday to commemorate the Jarama battle, when the British volunteers first went into action in Spain. Even when this war is over and we have other and greater anniversaries to celebrate, I hope that we shall not forget this gallant handful of men; they volunteered to fight in the first as well as in the last ditch. I was interested to hear how many of them hold front-rank positions to-day. Nicoletti, first political commissar of the Brigades, was released by Mussolini's collapse, and has taken a leading part in the present struggle for liberation in Italy; Vittori led the Corsican revolt; Rodimstev, defender of Madrid, was one of the generals commanding at Stalingrad; General Walter is now commander of the Koskiusco division fighting with the Red Army. And of course there is Tito, who organised the passage of the volunteers for Spain past the police cordons and over the mountains. But there are others who can't fight again, some physically wrecked by long imprisonment in North Africa, Spain and France. They need help to-day for medical treatment and artificial limbs. The International Brigade Association would be glad to receive donations at 144 Holborn, E.C.1.

* * *

I was glad to see that Mr. Maxton is bringing the case of Suresh Vaidya to Mr. Amery's notice by a question, though he may get no satisfaction. Mr. Vaidya, a Muslim by creed and a Mahratta by race, seems a spirited man whom any army would wish to recruit as a willing soldier. But he is an Indian patriot, who resents the fact that his country was pitchforked into this war without her consent. Accordingly he refuses to serve, and since his Tribunal would not regard his objection as conscientious, he has been dealt with by court-martial. Legally, since he is a British subject resident for some years in London as a journalist, he is of course liable to conscription. But he can argue that for good reasons of prudence compulsory service was never imposed on India. On moral and political grounds that constitutes a strong case, not indeed for formal exemption, but for a tacit decision to leave him alone. What would the Army lose thereby—at most a score or two of equally unwilling conscripts, most of them students, who would only be an embarrassment?

* * *

"Golly," I said, hastily shutting, first, *Interglossa*, by L. Hogben (Penguin very special) and then *Loom of Language*, by Frederick Bodmer (Unwin, 15*s*.) both of which explain, with a wealth of learning, the problems of creating an international language. "Why does Hogben defend the simplicity of their new tongue with diagrams and charts and isoforms and what look very like mathematical tables? Why make the problem of language more difficult by using words that do not appear in Chambers's Dictionary? Would it not have been wise to explain their invention in Basic English, thereby offering a graceful tribute to Ogden, whose brilliant pioneering work they fully acknowledge?" I repeat these first thoughts lest others, too, should quickly shy away from what on a little further investigation I found to be a fascinating and instructive pursuit. With a help of a more persevering friend I discovered that anyone can play this game of language-building with enjoyment. Anyone? Well, any British, Russian, Chinese or other national who has that smattering of scientific knowledge that is common to all more or less educated people. For the basis of *Interglossa* is the vocabulary, largely Latin and Greek in origin, which has become universal—the telegraph and the gramophone, the plus and minus sign, the *phil* and the *logy* of philology. There is no grammar; "*moi aime toi*," says the Anglo-American soldier in North Africa, and Hogben uses the same pigeon simplicity. Some difficulties, it seemed to me, were awkwardly disposed of in *Interglossa*, but I came to the conclusion, after about an hour's discussion, that I could learn to read *Interglossa* fluently in another hour or so, write it almost as soon, and speak it with a few days' practice. Most of it you can make up as you go on. If someone tells you that Pe means a person, it is easy to guess that ovi-pe is a shepherd, pro-pe an ally and anti-pe (I suppose) an opponent.

Interglossa has advantages over Basic English. Amongst them are first that the political difficulties of persuading all the world that English is the right second language to learn do not arise; secondly that *Interglossa* can never be more than a "means of communication." Basic English has to me the supreme drawback that its general use would debase English. No use saying that it is not meant as a substitute for the English of Swift or Shakespeare. In practice, if Basic was used all over the world, how many publishers would have the unworldliness to forgo the profits and influence of addressing this vast new public. Should we write our books, our weekly and daily papers in a language that would only be known to a dwindling number of purely English-speaking people? And could English survive? But we must address the world public? Therefore we need a new language which all can understand as the auxiliary, with each of the great existing languages for more intimate and profound communications. This is my reason for differing with Mr. Churchill in this matter. In that most exciting and ingeniously modest piece of egotism in which the Prime Minister writes of his *Early Life*, he describes his own extreme distaste for Latin as a child and the savage punishments meted out at his school for those who were equally allergic to the classics. The world only opened to him when a wise schoolmaster taught him his own language. He adds that he would like to reform English education so that only those who were specially good at languages need learn Latin and Greek, while all would be compelled to learn their own mother tongue. If boys were not good at Latin, he says, he would not whip them; if they would not learn English, he would whip them hard. Would he whip them—or only all the foreigners—for not learning Basic?

* * *

Typically, Hogben chooses for the purposes of illustration, the twenty-third Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, the Atlantic Charter and the last part of the Communist Manifesto. I select from the first three sentences that which I think anyone can translate without an *Interglossa* dictionary.

(1) U Theo eque mi Ovi-pe. Mi post habe pan necesso Re.

(2) Tu date di Pani a Na.

(3) . . . assuro de pan Homini in pan Loco duro habe bio minus Phobo minus No-pluto.

Which shows that the same idea is apt to appear in fundamental documents of very different dates. The Communist Manifesto ends:

Pan proletari de pan Nation; gene Zygo.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to C. C. (address please).

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Four Single Pound Notes lost 27th Jan. (black-out), vicinity Market St., etc.; sentimental value; reward.—*Aberdeen Evening Express.*

Once upon a time we used to go to winter sports . . . air like very cold dry Bollinger . . . new snow hissing from ski-points . . . hot chocolate at Hauselmann's . . . mint juleps in bars with fruit-machines. . . .

One day there'll be peace again. . . . Then we shall all ski happily ever after, because we shall be dressed for it, and so well dressed, by ——
Advt in daily press.

When asked if the husband of a woman with whom he had been living knew of the association, W— G— replied at Leicester County Court yesterday: "He used to bring us up tea in bed in the morning."—*Daily Herald.*

One of the eight men under the spotlight was asked: "Why are you a Tory?" He replied: "Because I hate class distinctions."

That is the spirit of the new Tory democracy.—*Evening Standard.*

AMERICAN OPINION

The book which ousted Wendell Willkie's *One World* from the top place on the best seller list, and has remained at the top for over three months, is a badly written, disorganised volume by an Armenian-born American, which was rejected by half the publishing houses in New York. *Under Cover*, by John Roy Carlson (to use the name he puts on the cover, though the Index gives four other aliases), is an account of "four years in the Nazi underworld of America." During his explorations of darkest America, Mr. Carlson, usually masquerading as George Pagnanelli—an Italian malcontent—joined some 45 "patriotic" groups, all in more or less open sympathy with Nazism or Fascism.

Since Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* there has been a flood of literature about the success of fictitious Fascist movements in America (a fictional best seller of the moment, *See What I Mean?* by Lewis Browne, tells of the rise to power of a dictator in Los Angeles), with the result that dictator-fans are almost as common as detective-fans, and the threat of Fascism seems as remote as the threat of mass murders. *Under Cover* is a well-documented warning to America that the threat of domestic Fascism is not just an idle tale to cause shivers amongst the occupants of centrally heated apartments.

America has been warned that there was a well-laid plot against her freedom and independence at least as early as 1938; that this plot was financed and organised by convinced (and by now frequently convicted) Nazis and Fascists; that it was supported with fervour and full knowledge by many hundreds of Americans, and with equal fervour, though in ignorance of its ultimate objectives, by many thousands more.

America has been warned that this plot was based on the Nazi belief that America could be checkmated in three moves; first, America would be weakened internally by disuniting the varied groups, racial and political, that go to make up her people; secondly, America would be weakened externally by disuniting her from those countries which opposed Germany; thirdly, America would be conquered by force of example, not of arms, when Nazi Germany could clothe her naked force in the respectable mantle of success.

America has been warned to look under such covers as "patriotism" and "national interest" and "Americanism." Carlson shows that the German societies, which had been dissolved by Congress in 1918, and were revived by George Sylvester Viereck in 1919 as Steuben Societies, were the first to sow in the fertile ground of domestic division. But these Nazi societies suffered from the rigid exclusiveness of their racial basis; German-Americans who boasted of their German origin were "hyphenated Americans," and as such a suspect minority in no position to appeal to the anti-minority feeling of malcontents. "Americanism" or "patriotism" was the camouflage by which these proselytising adullamites concealed both the narrowness and the real nature of their cave. Though "patriotism" of this sort is traditionally associated with hating other countries, it proved equally possible to use it for stimulating hatred of other groups in the same country. "America for the Americans" soon came to mean America for those citizens not of Jewish faith or communist leanings or negro blood. America has been most forcibly warned by this book of the dangers of indulging in just a little race-prejudice, for anti-semitism was the common denominator of practically every fascistic movement in America, and was the bait by which all sorts of "respectable" people were lured into the most crackpot ventures. When anti-semitism seemed too obvious or too dangerous a phrase it was disguised as pro-Christian feeling, until the very word Christian became almost synonymous in subversive circles with anti-semitism. Pelley, the leader of the Silver Shirts, shouted "Christ or Chaos"; Father Coughlin's movement was called "the Christian Crusade"; "Buy Christian" stickers were distributed with every packet of Nazi literature. Concealing anti-semitism under such cover was often necessary, but it went against the grain; as one good Nazi-American told Carlson, "this business of Christianity is nothing but Jewish propaganda."

The warning is terribly clear that once you have created a devil it is very hard to stop it breeding; hate is a difficult emotion to keep strictly in focus. The demonology of these American Fascist groups is particularly instructive. The Jews had two separate plots to rule the world: one through the "Protocols" of Zion (which were printed and earnestly distributed in thousands by the subversive groups), the other through communism, of which the American expression was "The Jew Deal" of Mr. Roosevelt (who, along with Mr. Hull, Mr. Wallace, Mr. J. P. Morgan, etc. was, of course, Jewish). With the identity of Jews and communists thus firmly established Mrs. Dilling went a step further and produced "The Red Network," which proved that practically everyone from the University of Chicago to the Y.M.C.A. was communist. Merwin Hart, chairman of the New York State Economic Council, completed the process of confusion by his public statement, "If you find any organisation containing the word 'democracy' it is probably directly or indirectly affiliated with the communist party." This method was simple enough for a Detroit thug to grasp and describe to Carlson: "You ties in the nigger with the Jews, den you calls the Jews communists: you'll soon loin 'em kid."

Even older and more established in America than anti-semitism and anti-negro feeling is anti-British sentiment. This was the theme song of the international divisionists, and, like anti-semitism, it tempted many respectable Americans to associate with very dubious company. Independent-minded New Englanders who wished to express as forcibly as possible their determination to keep America free from the subtle influence of England as a mother country would associate with such anglophobes as Edward James, who seemed, by his hatred of England, to be redressing the balance upset by his forbear, Henry James. But Edward James went further and wrote, "The reason I am for Hitler and the Germans is because I honestly believe that Hitler and the Germans are interested that we should save our-way-of-life against the British." Irish-Americans with long memories would enjoy the forthright condemnation of the Old Country by someone as gifted with words as Joseph Downey; but Downey went further and joined the German Bund, saying, "I can admire a man who beat the British at their game. Hitler has defied the British, and we Irish know what the British are. I respect a man like Adolf Hitler." Many white Americans would appreciate the view of the negro leader, Robert Jordan, that the British Empire was ruled by "International Jews," but his cure for this ill was the victory of Hitler in Europe, and elsewhere the liberation of the negroes and overthrow of all whites by Japan. Thus the pleasant vice of xenophobia was made into an instrument of self-destruction for America.

In the debate *Under Cover* has aroused, the opposition hold that it is "smear tactics" to call the associates of such extremists as James, Downey, Coughlin and Pelley "stooges for Hitler," and asserts that these crackpots were mere hangers on to the mass movement of "America First," which attempted to keep America neutral in the European war. By including a special index to members of Congress who associated with subversive groups Carlson openly made his book a political issue. In reply members of the disbanded "America First" movement demand that the investigator shall be investigated; or they carry on their own investigations into the sinister under-cover movement to sell out America to Britain, which, it is alleged, is being engineered by the English Speaking Union, the Rhodes Scholars and other "expatriates."

When this uproar is over and forgotten—as it will be in twelve months from now—*Under Cover* will still have left its mark on the thought of the American public. America has been warned that pressure groups to keep America out of foreign wars are not a purely American prerogative; foreign interests and even foreign gold may participate.

Putting American interests first may suit the interests of a very motley bunch of non-Americans. Alien interests are not always interventionist; isolationists may be playing a very far-reaching international game. After all that has been written between the wars to prove that America was dragged into war in 1917 by British propaganda, international financiers and alien interests, it is worth noting that someone has at last written a best seller that tells Americans about a dark, sinister and thoroughly alien plot to keep America out of war.

W. D. C.

RUMOURS

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness," said Cowper in *The Task*,

> "Some boundless contiguity of shade,
> Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
> Of unsuccessful or successful war
> Might never reach me more."

Travelling by stage-coach, rumour got about enough in Cowper's time (he died when the Napoleonic threat was nearing its height) to worry this always unhappy man into a longing for reclusion. Now that we are organised into vast whispering communities and treated as one collective mind by press and radio, none of us can escape; and our appetite for rumour seems to have grown with its opportunities for eating.

The cheerful rumour matters less, perhaps, than that which disturbs or worries, and since the events that produced the Defence Regulation about "spreading alarm or despondency" our wartime legislators have had the less reason for concern as our fortunes have improved. Most of the rumours now current (the Second Front next week, the war over by the spring, the riots in German cities) are cheerful enough viewed from our side of the battle. Examples of the "alarm or despondency" rumours are Hitler's secret weapon (now reaching fantastic proportions, and unaccountably fostered by most of the "experts" in the press), and the fearful impoverishment which will face us after the war (clearly disingenuous, and surely significant in its sources of support?).

Most rumours begin as expressions of opinion and acquire their factual trimmings as they grow. Of the few prosecutions under Regulation 39BA that have been brought, nearly all took place in 1940. At first the press, in reporting the police court proceedings, were timid about reporting the substance of the rumours, so there is no available record of some of the earliest stories that led to punishment; but it is interesting, at this stage of the war, to examine a few that did get more fully reported as the press got bolder. On July 5th, 1940, for example, the headmaster of a Hamilton school was charged with having told his pupils that the Germans would land in Ireland and blockade Britain, and that the children would have to eat cats and dogs; they might, he added, get a little rat or snail soup. His pupils became alarmed and despondent. Three days later, at Tunbridge Wells, a Post Office night telephone operator was fined £25 for telling a woman that he believed twenty parachutists had been dropped at Hawkhurst, though he added that the story was unconfirmed. Next, an employee of the Oxford City Council Electricity Department called to read the meter at a house, and told a lady there that "the Nazis are not after the likes of us. . . . we shall be as well off under the Nazis as we are now," and that the British Government, who had interests in Germany, did not mean to win the war. The Bench disagreed about this case, thinking, it may be, that a statement like this made to a person of small intelligence might cause relief rather than alarm, while if made to an intelligent listener it should cause hilarity rather than despondency. Shortly after this, a man told two garage hands at Wolverhampton that twenty-four parachutists had landed at Stourport, fifteen having been captured. The magistrate dismissed the charge, and hoped the prosecution would teach the offender a lesson. Then a man was fined £10 for audibly expressing the opinion that Hitler would win (which is alarming), that it might not be too bad in this country if he did (which is consoling), and that before long £1 notes would be worth a shilling a hundredweight (which caused some despondency). He had also said that there were people in this country who ought to be shot, but his counsel argued that this was the general opinion. When the chairman asked whether it would be punishable to say that some member of the Government ought to be shot, counsel replied that this could cause no depression because it might quite likely be true—as if the truth were never depressing.

Truth, however, was considered by the legislators when they drafted Regulation 39BA, making it an offence to "publish any report or statement relating to matters connected with the war which is likely to cause alarm or despondency." They added a proviso placing on the dispenser of rumour the onus of proving that he had reasonable cause to believe it was true; though, even so, he must also prove that his "publication" of it was not malicious and "ought fairly to be excused." Malicious in this context probably means that the rumour was intended by its publisher to cause alarm or despondency, and this is probably the keynote of the whole passage. People who deliberately intend to damage public morale are really quite rare, and it is to such people that the regulation is by its own terms confined. It is among the vicissitudes of "unsuccessful or successful war" that the natural pessimist always comes into his own; and what a war he was having until eighteen months ago!

Right up to March, 1942, some M.P.s were demanding that 39BA should be enforced more rigorously. Alarm was pretty rife among those who knew anything at all, and despondency had displaced apathy among those who knew nothing. If we had all known then what we know now, alarm and despondency would have seemed inadequate words. But what escaped the notice of those who thought speech was getting a little too free in this country and called for more prosecutions was the necessity for proving, under 39BA, that the offenders were moved by the desire to alarm or depress their listeners. This was not usually the case. The low-voiced, saloon-bar communique expresses, as a rule, the longing of the nonentity for a few moments' solemn importance; the unhappiness of others is a by-product.

Then what about rumours of a wildly cheerful nature, fantastically untrue and therefore the worse in their delayed-action slump effect? To fall foul of the Regulation, you need have no intention of causing alarm; it is enough if you cause despondency, for the two words are employed as alternatives. So the countless Second Front rumours, which have so assiduously for two years nourished the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, might at any time have exposed their authors and distributors to prosecution. And even if they managed to satisfy the court that "the publication thereof was not malicious and ought fairly to be excused," on the ground that their intention was to encourage rather than (by raising false hopes) to dismay, the opportunity thus to excuse themselves would not arise until they had been brought into court. It is when you examine the Regulation from this angle that its ultra-emergency quality becomes apparent. It was born at Dunkirk in an atmosphere akin to panic, and was a vigorous child for a few months; it caught a chill in North Africa, and has been bedridden since the collapse of Italy and the German retreat through the Steppes. But it still breathes. If, inconceivably, anything goes seriously wrong with the war, the rumour-monger will have to be careful again. C. H. Rolph

THE LATEST HAMLET

HAMLET at the New Theatre is not—here several adjectives hold up their hands like children in class—is not a distinguished production. It leaves much to be desired as a spectacle, while the stage-construction, though lending itself to some ingenious and powerful effects, has serious drawbacks from the point of view of dramatic presentation.

When the curtain went up it was obvious that the permanent background (rather too heavy) was designed to suggest interior scenes—it allowed depth on one side for crowds—most useful. On the other side jutted out a round gothic balcony of non-committal aspect which might either be regarded as out of doors or, say, as a sort of musicians' gallery in a vast stone hall. This balcony had to serve as the castle-platform of Elsinore on which the ghost walked. Unfortunately it was far too small for that purpose and the eerie impressiveness of the ghost scenes was injured by Bernardo, Marcellus, Horatio and Hamlet being within arm's length of the apparition, which had to squeeze past them. A little less heed for literal construction, a little more Elizabethan freedom, and this defect might have been avoided.

That Elizabethan stage-conventions were most favourable to poetic drama is indisputable. Patent make-believe leaves us freer than scenery to receive impressions through ear and mind, and its effect upon actors is even more important. Unsupported by plausible surroundings they are forced to draw upon themselves to create the illusion of reality. Thus they not only tend to act more from within, but they are able to modulate with less embarrassment from realistic dialogue into those passages and speeches which can only be given their full emotional splendour and significance by *unnatural* delivery. The crucial test of an actor or actress in any great Shakespearean part is not only the degree to which he or she succeeds in making a vivid consistent character out of it, but whether he or she shows a true instinct for those moments when psychological interest should yield to poetic interpretation. The extent to which the play as a whole rivets our attention depends upon interpretation of character—which shows how vital that is; but its power to exalt us, upon the imaginative rendering of its poetry.

The acting at the New Theatre is most uneven, both individually and in concert. However, on first nights many things often go wrong, especially in a tremendous and complicated play, and I may surmise that I saw this production at its worst. I am sure many crumples could be easily ironed out of it, though other defects, I fear, are inherent and irremovable. In the crowded scenes of action (the Play scene, the tussle over Ophelia's grave, the fencing match and final slaughter), it was impossible to tell if essential lines had been inexcusably cut or lost in confusion. Both, I expect. Yet I thoroughly enjoyed the performance and responded to Mr. Robert Helpmann's Hamlet with sympathy and admiration.

Its power to move us, and its limitations, spring from being a boyish Hamlet. (There have been others like it, notably that Italian-German actor, Herr Moissi, whose company Mr. Cochran brought over in 1930.) When the curtain rises on the second scene, the Court banquet (Mr. Basil Sydney daringly delivered Claudius' opening speech as though he "had wine taken,") at first you are not aware of Hamlet. Then you notice a small figure in black squatting at the foot of a pillar, looking helpless and miserable. He seems a boy who might well inspire distress in his mother, but hardly uneasiness in a guilty usurper. This first impression struck the dominant note of Mr. Helpmann's Hamlet. Where were Hamlet's ominous brooding and dignity, and those starts of dangerous ruthless arrogance? Where the fearless and spirited prince who, like a true hero of romance, with all the world against him, proves again and again more than a match for his enemies with tongue and sword?

Light, small and nimble, there are moments when Mr. Helpmann is physically at a disadvantage. But Hamlet's uncontrollable excitement, his affectionate friendliness, his sudden transitions from ferocity to love (subtly graded in the great scene with his mother)—all that side of his character, of which even Claudius was aware when he described him as "most generous and free from all contriving" (only partially true, however)—that Mr. Helpmann conveyed most admirably. It was characteristic of his interpretation that he spoke the rhyming couplet "O cursed spite" not with ringing bitterness, but faintingly, and that other famous curtain couplet (this was an original reading), "The play's the thing," not triumphantly, but with deliberate meditative certainty. Few Hamlets have excited my sympathy more but—(here is the knock of regret, as the Americans say)—this was too exclusively a protective sort of sympathy. What a part Hamlet is! No wonder every actor longs to play it! No character in drama offers equal opportunities for establishing intimate relations with an audience. We love instantly and instinctively free spontaneous expression of emotion in human beings, and what figure in all Drama is as spontaneous a human being as Hamlet? Critics and commentators may try to unravel his inconsistencies, but the public down the ages have been wiser: they have been content to be aware of him without understanding him. His creator knew that this was far more important. What does it matter if we lose our way in a human being as in a forest? Indeed, it is a rare privilege.

And is there a talker (Professor Stoll has said this), a talker in the world of either fact or fiction to touch Hamlet? He excels even Falstaff. And, by the way, one of the excellences of Mr. Helpmann's performance was the perfection with which he brings out in dialogue the spontaneous brilliance and emotional variety of a talker unsurpassed. In the profoundly contemplative passages he was not so impressive, just as he fell below the heroic note. His voice is of subtle but not powerful compass. He should, I think, often speak louder. And there is a moment in the last scene of all which he is especially qualified to bring out which, nevertheless, he misses. Death had often seemed to Hamlet "a consummation devoutly to be wished," and now just after he has snatched the cup from Horatio, bidding him "absent himself from felicity awhile," he utters a heart-shaking cry, "O, I *die*, Horatio, the potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit." At the last moment Hamlet wished to live.

The fencing match was a terrible muddle—a long, ferocious brawl. The relation of mother and son (so important) was obscured. For art's sake, for Shakespeare's sake, let it be played more deliberately. Ophelia does not give that impression of helpless biddable gentleness which is so essential. She seems a young woman very well able to look after herself—and she goes mad realistically, not romantically—a bad mistake. Her madness is pathological rather than pathetic. The Queen makes nothing of the beautiful speech describing her death. Mr. Lawrence Hanray's Polonius has very good points and is already familiar to us. But his tenderness for his children which he was the first to show should tell even more and quite as much as his fussy senile pedantry. Otherwise their overpowering grief at his death seems incredible. Yes, I have many holes to pick, but with all its shortcomings this performance is well worth seeing. Desmond MacCarthy

SCRIABIN AND PROKOFIEFF

On March 8th those who were prescient enough (and, considering the nature of the programme, they were not few) to show up at the Wigmore Hall for the C.E.M.A. concert heard a deeply interesting recital by Louis Kentner. Two Sonatas by Scriabin (one early, the Fourth—one late, the Ninth), the Sixth Sonata of Prokofieff, and a group of pieces by Balakireff: this was not only rich entertainment, but a lesson in the history of pianistic writing. For at this distance of time it is possible to see how much truer to the genius of the instrument is the line of composers which stretches from Bach, through Mozart, Chopin and Liszt, to Debussy, than that which proceeds from Handel and Beethoven to Brahms and César Franck. To the first school belong the Slavs, and among them by far the most inventive of the late composers for the piano. Scriabin must certainly be classed among these, though rather for the skill with which he manages melody, accompaniment and ornament, than for the reasons he himself would have given. One had hoped, after all these years, to find his later harmonic schemes rather more satisfying than they in fact appear to be. His melodic ideas were good, if inclined to be tenuous, and his musicianship was enviably disposable. These advantages show to good effect in the works of his first period (which includes the Fourth Sonata). One of the uses of rhetoric is to make a good deal of very little, and if we are convinced we cannot object. But there was a Coleridgian flaw in Scriabin's most peculiar nature, and after the Fifth Sonata a rigid theory takes the field, smothering what inspiration was originally present. It is curious how closely pieces like the Ninth Sonata and *Vers la Flamme* resemble the works of the Atonal school; there is the same impression as of an harmonic cocoon spun round the soul—at once a protection and a prison. In Scriabin's case the sensuous effect is usually agreeable because the schemes used are always the products of Wagnerian chromaticism and tend to avoid angular harmonic concussions. But this kind of perfection—and the Ninth Sonata is in its way perfect—is achieved at the expense of energy, clarity and forward drive. In spite of its many and violent nervous spasms, this music is entirely static, which perhaps explains why—except when confined to musical aphorisms—it so quickly palls on the ear. This was hardly Mr. Kentner's fault; he gave a performance that was almost explanatory in its exact observance of the composer's intentions. Strength and delicacy emerged, as they also did in his playing of Prokofieff's Sixth Sonata. I have no space here to discuss in detail this extraordinarily fine piece of music; but I would affirm that a second hearing (and Mr. Kentner has deepened and enlarged his interpretation since the first performance), suggests that this sonata is the most significant addition to piano literature since the death of Debussy. I await with lively curiosity Prokofieff's Seventh Sonata, which is to be played for the first time in this country by Mr. Frank Merrick on the 22nd March.

As a composer for the piano, Balakireff took from Liszt all that was best suited to his purposes. The result is personal. Though he worked in a tradition, his music is very much his own, and one notices this less in the concert pieces than in the *Mazurka* and the very charming *Rêverie.*

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Cecil Collins at the Lefevre

Mr. Cecil Collins is a poet who happens to use form and pigment instead of words. What he has to convey is a highly individual idea, sometimes about nature, sometimes about human life. It has struck him, for example, that the trees and the birds that inhabit them are, as it were, one creature, informed by a common life. A poet would have known how to say that in words that would have delighted us, even if they startled us. Mr. Collins says it by giving us trees whose branches are clad in plumage and birds whose wings and tails resemble foliage. Consent to take this water-colour as a poem and instantly it rhymes and scans. It has meaning and it has beauty. Commonly it is painters who illustrate poems. But I think Blake, if his shade could visit this exhibition, might be moved to write some *Songs of Innocence* to illustrate these designs.

The greater part of this exhibition consists of drawings and paintings in several manners and media dealing with the idea to which Mr. Collins has given the name of "the fool." The fool is creative innocence. He is sometimes the "pure fool" of the Parsifal legend. He is sometimes the artist; sometimes the adventurer: sometimes the little child of the Gospels. Always there is in him something fantastic, something that rejects the lines and movements of pedestrian reality. And so, usually in a calligraphic style, he appears as a half-human, mythological creation, whose movements are a dance. These strange mythical beings are drawn with a flowing beauty of line: their movements have a rare expressive grace, and even their dream-like forms are the invention of a mind that understands anatomy. Mr. Collins will not stop here; though it is hard to guess whither and how far he will go. But this daring talent of his, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, will go on inventing with an increasing sureness of step.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE MOVIES

"Hostages," at the Plaza.

"Candlelight in Algeria," at the Regal.

"Partisans," at the Tatler.

More thrillers, but this time about the war. *Hostages* is an exciting and well-acted story of occupied Prague, and *Candlelight in Algeria* reveals, in a time-honoured convention, the trap-doors and lovers that made possible the Allied landings in North Africa. For a thriller, the first of these is unusually solid and convincing: one gets the feel of occupation from the opening scene in a restaurant where a girl shocks her fiancé by dancing with the Nazis, and the layers of the New Order—official, collaborationist, underground—are laid open in a vivid cross-section. Oscar Homolka gives a faultless performance as a big industrialist, hand in glove with the Nazis; everything about him, from his coarse and cringing assurance down to the bristling eyebrows and the smeared look, is horribly alive, so that one wonders again why this talented actor, who has once more brought it off, should stop short at secondary parts. The other piece of acting which helps to give *Hostages* its unusual solidity is William Bendix's underground leader, tough, simple, sly and heroic: a child of nature very different from the knights-errant to whom as cinemagoers we are accustomed. These two, at different ends of the scale, give us the full measure of response to Nazi rule, and the accident by which they occupy the same cell as hostages awaiting the firing-squad becomes a real and not a melodramatic situation. Even the Nazis are varied and convincing enough in this film, the only drawback of which seemed to me the wolfy-wistful gaze of Miss Luise Rainer. Yet, though *Hostages* is by thriller standards an effective film, it quite fails to move us at any deeper level. Why this should be I don't quite know, except that Hollywood is Hollywood and Europe is Europe, and never the twain shall meet.

Candlelight in Algeria frankly goes all out for thrills and romance and gets them. This is the sort of English film which a few years ago would have been dreadfully second rate, but since then we have learnt a lot. The result, despite a rather hackneyed plot, is a streamlined affair. The stars are James Mason and a much improved Carla Lehmann.

I have left *Partisans* to the last only because, like other Russian documentaries of the war, it must knock any idea of entertainment out of our heads. The camera-men dropped behind the German lines have done their usual matter-of-fact and heroic job. If anything, this film is even more impressive than the records of Leningrad and Stalingrad, for here is resistance at its source. The Nazis hold towns and villages; the guerrillas, men and women, occupy the surrounding woods, marshes and snowy wastes. From Karelia to the Kuban, in circumstances of almost unbelievable hardship, it is the same. Those who encountered the painful sentimentalities of *North Star* should redress the balance by going to see *Partisans.* It has a sirring commentary written and read by Mr. J. B. Priestley.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Witch," at the Arts.

This play, adapted by Mr. John Masefield from the Norwegian of H. Wiers-Jenssen, has a difficult theme: a young wife, married to an elderly Lutheran pastor, finds herself turning into a witch, seduces her son-in-law, "wishes" her husband's death and breaks down into confession at his funeral. The difficulty is this, to find a point of view which can hold a modern audience and also make intelligible beliefs and conflicts which in themselves appear grotesque. It cannot be said the authors of *The Witch* succeed. This play about belief engenders no flicker of religious emotion, none of the conflicts are worked out, and the characters are merely Lutheran lay figures given a modern varnish. With such formidable weaknesses, any performance of *The Witch* is bound to be unsatisfactory; in fact, the production at the Arts Theatre does remarkably well with its material. Decor and grouping make the most of situations which fail to be dramatic, and a lack of body in the characters is retrieved, or almost retrieved, by good acting. Mr. Abraham Sofaer as the pastor and Miss Mary Morris as his rebellious wife give excellent performances which deserve a better occasion.

Free German League of Culture, Little Theatre

Those who care to see first-class talent making use of toy accommodation will not regret a journey to the Little Theatre at 36 Upper Park Road, London, N.W.3, where the Free German League of Culture is producing a topical review, *My Goodness—My Alibi!* Every member of the cast has the polish and assurance of the experienced performer on the Continental stage. Wilhelm Bruckner, once well known in Viennese Opera, and Annemarie Hase, are merely two outstanding performers in an excellent cast. German and English intermingle intelligibly. Those interested should write to the theatre for information about times of performance.

LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG

THE watchdogs of the nation
May be of any breed,
Pug, bulldog or Alsatian,
Cross-bred or pedigreed;
Sharp dogs, dull dogs, deep dogs,
Pups sired by dogs of note,
House-dogs, gun-dogs, sheepdogs—
All may get the vote.

Shaggy dogs and wiry,
Of every shape and kind,
Gentle dogs and fiery,
Young, and old and blind,
All dogs have their chances
By the people's choice,
But voters back their fancies,
They need no master's voice.

Poodles with a letter,
Prize dogs from the Show,
Will maybe do no better
Than dogs few Judges know.
Dog-fanciers will not swallow
Direction from above—
Their leader they will follow,
His dog they cannot love.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

BOMBING

SIR,—Critic's note on the possible bombing of Rome and the article on Vengeance in the current number of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, with the criticism of the bombing of German cities by Archbishop Lord Lang and the Bishop of Chichester in the House of Lords are disturbing to those of us—a considerable number—who are sickened by the daily record of death and destruction, but are compelled to accept the attacks of the Allied bombers as a vital part of the plan to rid the world of Fascism.

We all knew that there would assuredly be havoc in our cities and death in our streets when war was declared in 1939. Dread of what must happen is the excuse for Neville Chamberlain and his futile appeasement policy. We suffered exactly as we had anticipated. But the German blitz did not secure a German victory. Now, with the Americans, we are doing to the Germans what they did to us, and worse. If this is mere vengeance, it is silly and wicked. If it is hastening the end of the war and so, by the killing of a few thousand German civilians, preventing the killing of millions more men and women of all nations and the intensified destruction which will mean a starved continent for generations, then it is more than justified and its critics are short-sighted sentimentalists.

Killing civilians is no more detestable than killing soldiers. It would indeed be of far less concern to the nation if I, at my age, were killed by a bomb than if my grandson were killed by a machine-gun bullet. The trouble is that we do not know what is the real military value of the flattening out of Hamburg and Berlin. We do know that the blitz here intensified the British determination to win the war at all costs, and that it did not seriously hinder the production of war material. There is no reason to suppose that our bombing is weakening German morale and, for all the boasted destruction, Hitler can still fight on two fronts and, while losing in Russia, is holding his own in Italy.

If we knew for certain that the bombers' achievements were weakening the equipment of the enemy armies in the East and were making impossible large scale air attacks on this country we should be happier.

Exactly the same considerations apply to the shelling of the Monte Cassino monastery and the bombing of Rome. If they are demanded by the necessity to end the war as quickly as possible, they are right. The destruction of the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel would be a woeful tragedy. I, of course, agree that my life and the lives of my sailor and soldier grandsons are of infinitely less value to the world than the masterpiece of Michelangelo. But is it certain that the masterpiece is of more value to the world than the lives of the hundreds of thousands who will die if the war drags on? Is there any means of deciding how many men should die that one great work of art shall be saved?

We are up against a revolting alternative, and our lot is the more miserable because, with good reason, we have so little faith in the judgment, the understanding or the vision of the men who are deciding our fate and the fate of our children.

Savile Club, W.1. SIDNEY DARK

BENEDETTO CROCE

SIR,—Last week a correspondent called Benedetto Croce a political nonentity. The inspiration which Croce has given to political thought and action inside Italy during the last six months is great. He has always been important to the youth of Italy. During the last twenty years there is hardly a fighting anti-Fascist in the professions, the universities and the arts but has been down to Naples to consult him. Only three weeks ago, in his remarkable speech at the Bari Congress, he noted the quandary he was in, when Italian soldiers came to consult him in 1940–41 about their behaviour in a war they didn't believe in (and how well he met it !).

I used to see Senator Croce frequently during my residence in Italy as a newspaper correspondent, and later, on annual visits up to 1938, and I can think of few people in that country with more political knowledge and influence. One knew then that if only he were spared he would yet play an important part in Italian affairs. If Italy should choose a Republican form of State she may choose Benedetto Croce as her first President, even though he is the originator of the Regency plan for the Prince of Naples, a plan which the correspondent who calls Croce a political nonentity so warmly supports! This is a typical instance of Croce's political influence upon those who least suspected it.

Sforza alone could not have united the six Italian democratic parties at Bari in a solid block against Victor Emmanuel. It was a fine display of unity, and one can imagine the laughter which would have greeted the remark, when it was all over: "As a politician we must admit that Croce is a nonentity"—had your correspondent been at the Congress to make it himself. SYLVIA SPRIGGE

Thames Chambers, W.C.2.

GERMAN PRISONERS

SIR,—With regard to German prison camps in this country, the following might be of interest to you: I spoke to an elderly soldier a few days ago, on leave from guarding prison camps. Every morning, he told me, the prisoners assemble in the dining-hall to salute a large portrait of Hitler, and this is compulsory, on British soil. They are strictly forbidden to speak with their guards, and are under the complete control of their Nazi colonel. Some do speak, though, and express their weariness, to say the least, with that strict Nazi discipline. But they feel the hopelessness of their situation. Must that be so? They cannot write to you or anyone about it, even if that feeling should be more than a vague dissatisfaction. Therefore I should like to speak for them here. Give them a chance to choose their bosses! Segregate those who wish to be Nazis and have their discipline and those who might become genuine friends of their captives.

This is not at all a sentimental appeal for "good" Germans, but apart from the political issue, surely they could have peace from their Nazi bosses once they are here. I very much agree with your correspondent of your issue of February 12th. He is going a large step farther and actively enlisting their support. But, somewhat embittered, I wonder if that could ever be a War Office undertaking. On the contrary. What is actually happening is that the British soldiers who guard the prisoners are getting talks on what bad fellows all German prisoners are, bossy and arrogant, and how they must hate them, by lecturers who have supposedly (and perhaps quite truly) lived in Germany for many years and "know." This, at least, was what that soldier told me, and which made me very sad.

H. L.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SIR,—One of the greatest of our educational shams is the generally accepted claim that a public school education is the best. The average man, however intelligent or inquiring, readily believes that Eton moulded Eden or that Harrow moulded Churchill. Nor is his belief unfounded—except that any two respectable secondary schools could have done at least as well with similar human material. Perhaps we forget that. Perhaps we also forget the equally large number of people who forwent a public school education, only to outrival their "better educated" comrades, for genius or brilliance is not moulded; it is perfected.

The war has naturally brought this educational sham into the daylight where it may be properly examined—and discredited. Only those figures who have enjoyed the "best" education—exceptions are rare and quickly passed over—ever see the name of their schools in large print—to the greater glory of their educators. The public schools provide the best education, so the saying runs, because they produce the better men, the symbol of which usually presents itself (especially in cartoons, books and films) as of a pseudo-brilliant, hearty gamesome type. Few can wish to acquire the first quality—and those possessing the second make good entertainment when viewed at a distance or read about.

Such schools have ever been known for their exalted Chauvinism. That is tradition. Tradition also maintains that they should continue to be "run" by England's wealthier families, just as by their ancestors before them. The English public school exacts a heavy price from its pupils, who would undoubtedly have benefited equally well from less expensive teaching; and if it teaches you the way of the world—that the team spirit (which can only be effectively revealed by selfless game-players) is all—then the secondary schools show no inferior standard nor aim.

The aloofness of the former was well illustrated by a past editorial in *The Haileyburian* which calmly asserted that, were the public schools opened to the generality, "their merits would be lost in the inrush." Yet, what "merits" have the public schools that others have not? And who will lose us these merits? Certainly not the secondary schoolboy who has proved himself mentally alert with regard to post-war reconstruction; he appeared, for instance, in far larger numbers than the public schoolboy at the series of first-rate Youth Conferences which, only last holidays, were brought to the public eye with the highly successful 2,000 Young Students' Conference at Westminster. Over 135 secondary schools parti-

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JONATHAN CAPE

cipated in each of these conferences, whereas the public schools contributed only nine people.

However, so long as the public schools ultimately admit the " generality," lowering the fees in the right direction, many problems would be the more easily solved. Nobody would then worry about the heartiness, the aloofness, the falsification of ideals, the narrow-mindedness, or the trivialities which, after all, merely go to make up what we are. Indeed, only the secondary schoolboy would worry—and perhaps he would educate us, too. PUBLIC SCHOOL-BOY

PAINTERS AND PURCHASERS

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Hedley Smart's letter in your issue of February 5th, may I point out that a society of the kind proposed by him is already in existence, with this principal difference, that the minimum membership fee is one guinea and that there is no limit to the number of members. This society, the Contemporary Art Society, reviews of whose exhibitions have from time to time appeared in your columns, was founded in 1910. Each year a buyer is appointed from its Executive Committee, with absolute discretion to spend a sum (always considerably more than half the Society's income) on the purchase of works by living artists for presentation to public galleries, both national and municipal, in this country. The works of art acquired are not necessarily given away at once, but are sometimes retained for the purpose of loans to exhibitions or for inclusion in the Society's own exhibitions.

Since the foundation of the Society in 1910, it has been directly responsible for the first works to enter the Tate Gallery by John, Epstein, Gill, Maillol, Rouault, Stanley Spencer, Duncan Grant, and Paul Nash ; it was with the aid of the Society that the Tate acquired its first Picasso and its first Segonzac. May I add finally that two of the Society's most recent purchases were made from the sale of the collection of Sir Michael Sadler, who was for many years a valued member of its Executive Committee.

EDWARD MARSH,
Chairman, Contemporary Art Society.
Tate Gallery, Millbank, S.W.1.

[The Contemporary Art Society performs a most valuable service, but it is not conspicuous for missionary zeal and cannot claim a monopoly. Its example is encouraging to those who pursue a similar good object by slightly different means. Mr. Hedley Smart's scheme has an advantage that Sir Edward does not mention : each member is to have a voice in deciding who is to act as buyer. The result should be to give the members a more direct and personal interest in the work.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

PRISON REFORM

SIR,—As any member of the audience who left last Saturday evening's meeting of the Prison Medical Reform Council early may have drawn from the fact that I was in the chair the conclusion that I supported some of the extraordinary statements made, I must ask you to allow me to disassociate myself from them.

In all good faith the organisers arranged for a discussion on the problem of the homosexual, realising that the present method of confinement without treatment is cruel, useless and stupid. I am sure, however, they could not have foreseen that many of the arguments would sound like a justification of homosexuality.

The Prison Medical Reform Council, which has as sponsors a score of well-known and admirable people, will do splendid work if it forces on the authorities, as part of its aims, the scientific treatment of the homosexual. It is surprising, however, that when this was discussed at the meeting, one speaker claimed that Michael Angelo, Julius Cæsar, William Shakespeare and Thomas Gray were all homosexuals. I am amazed that statements like these are made, without any evidence, about the bearers of some of the most distinguished names in history. That, too, was mild compared with other things that were said.

That was why, at the end, I said that, although not a scientist or a doctor, I was a man of the world who knew much more than any other of the speakers of the real facts of the case, and added that I had always been the enemy of homosexuals who, in the theatre, the world of art, and even higher up, boasted of their vices and spread them. " So far from being persecuted nonentities," I declared, " they are rich and powerful."

Hearing this, one of the previous speakers shouted, " You are maligning an excellent body of men ! "

That was too much. I immediately said, " I declare the meeting closed." HANNEN SWAFFER

ARTHUR MORRISON

SIR,—I was very glad to read Mr. Pritchett's appreciation of Arthur Morrison's work.

I have always been puzzled why Morrison, that master painter of atmosphere, that alert observer of social conditions and their psychological consequences is practically unknown to the average British reader. I should like to mention one part of his literary production omitted by Mr. Pritchett. I am referring to his works with an Essex setting. The author reveals a wide knowledge of the folklore bound up with that county where he spent a great part of his childhood.

In his novel *Cunning Murrell*, as well as in his Essex tales (belonging to the collections of short stories, *Dress Vanities* and *Green Ginger*), the reader is confronted with the Essex man still typical of the eighties of the last century. His life is ruled by deeply rooted superstitions which make him cling to rites and customs hundreds of years old. The reader of the " Essex Works " will hardly recognise in their author the same man who wrote those moving studies of the East End of London. He proves a master in the analysis of spheres populated by completely different characters. This is significant since it gives evidence of his broad outlook and his understanding interest in human problems. GERTRUDE FALK

DEAF-AID

SIR,—Recent correspondence in the *Times* indicates that National Help to the Deaf is to be greatly increased, but there is no suggestion that mechanical aids should be brought within reach of the majority.

Is it generally realised that the deaf, even the very deaf, can enjoy an appreciable measure of human intercourse, without the haunting consciousness that their associates are suffering strain, by means of electric and other appliances : but that these are in the hands of firms who have bought the patents and are only accessible to the comparatively well-to-do?

What would be the reaction of the public if astigmatic lens could be so withheld ?

It is tragically apparent that many of the young, as the result of various forms of war service, are to suffer this affliction. Surely it would be possible for the Government to buy up the patents and produce a perfected national instrument—at a cost that all could meet. N. LEGGE

NATURAL BEAUTY

SIR,—Mr. Wood's letter accusing the Ministry of Supply (Timber Production Dept.) of " irremediable destruction at celebrated beauty spots," needs some correcting as far as his remarks apply to Devil's Bridge, Cardigan.

It is true that the opposite side of the ravine has been denuded, but this was the result of private enterprise. When it was learnt that the Ministry's timber fellers were to take the trees which form a screen around the famous water falls, a public protest was made, and the Ministry deserves credit for holding its hand. I have no knowledge of the ovens in this district where timber is burnt for charcoal.

A consultative committee has been set up by the Government quite recently to advise the Ministry in cases where the natural beauty is likely to be impaired. The adviser for Wales is Mr. Clough Williams Ellis.

Aberystwyth. SYLVAN HOWELL

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Robert Louis Stevenson is one of those writers who maintain a kind of *ménage à trois* with life and literature and who captivate us—when they are our contemporaries—by making the scandal public. He is never silent about the vicissitudes of his life or the tactics of his art. But when they are not our contemporaries such writers cannot charm or flatter us with the urgent personal appeal. Feeling no affection—such as Stevenson aroused in his lifetime—we are more aware of the industrious artifice than of the zest which kept the tricky business going. The thing that has damned Stevenson in our generation is the thing that made him in his own: the air of strenuous candour and masculine nonchalance which now seems to us too often a studied and evasive display. With Meredith, who was his master, he strikes us as being one of the actors or mimics of literature, too succulently conscious of his role, and too argumentatively concerned with heroics as Falstaff was with honour; and in life, similarly, he is too anxious to prove himself a man. No doubt all that is the temperament of the invalid. Some of it came from Henley. But so histrionic a modesty —and Stevenson was volubly modest—amounts to an embarrassing conceit.

With these prejudices in mind I looked along the row of Stevensons and picked out two I had never read before: *The Master of Ballantrae* and his last, unfinished novel, *Weir of Hermiston*. If Stevenson had lived to finish *Weir* I think he would have silenced us. It has the marrow and foundation of a great novel. It springs out of the deepest emotion in his life which was his feeling for his father. It plays about with no intellectual freaks and fancies of the Jekyll and Hyde kind. At last Stevenson has found a style, because he feels an assurance he has never felt before. Stevenson's search for a style, a search which made a great impression on his contemporaries and which, alas, started a new school of journalese and fine writing among our elders, is a protest against late Victorian dullness; but it is also the symptom of a profound conflict which is overcome in *Weir*. In him, that sedulous pursuit is the sign of a restless, uncommitted and (I would suspect) treacherous and versatile character which is seriously under-developed. In one respect he was obviously so: in his inability to draw women. For while many male novelists draw women badly, I can think of none who, like Stevenson, cannot draw them at all and who would wreck a book as remarkable as *The Master of Ballantrae* by sticking a puppet in the middle of it. Until *Weir*, Stevenson seems unable to project even that idealised erotic sentiment about women, which almost all novelists can generate when more decisive powers of portraiture fail them; and one remembers, with repugnance, Stevenson's wooden refusal to write the life of Hazlitt because of the revelations of *Liber Amoris*. *Weir* suggests that at last Stevenson's instinct has awakened and that he is no longer frozen by the ambiguity—it is his own word—of female nature; for Kirstie, the younger, is the beginning of a real woman, coquettish, variable, passionate, unabashed by her instincts and quite conscious of her desire for power which (The Wife of Bath tells us) is the chief wish of the sex. True, she is only a sketch. But the older Kirstie, her aunt, a character in the mould of Juliet's nurse, is there also to show us that Stevenson had matured and warmed since the days of *The Master of Ballantrae*.

I suppose that Stevenson's clearest quality is his sense of space. I mean by that his power to place his scenes at a fitting distance and with an unflurried order and particularity, so that we do not blunder into them but are quietly brought to the point where the view is best. This leisurely expertness of direction makes him a master of narrative. This part of his performance delights one always. We enjoy it as we enjoy the clean, cunningly varied speeds and trained movements of an athlete on a long run. In *Weir of Hermiston*, Stevenson has extended the application of this sense of space to character. In the portrait of the appalling hanging judge, the Lord Justice Clerk, full to the neck with port, bubbling obscenities, pursuing the wretches in the dock with inhuman witticisms, and sitting up all night on his cases, Stevenson drew one of those three-dimensional and majestic figures which reconcile us to the shocking exigences of human nature. There is more than a hint of Sheridan Le Fanu's Mr. Justice Harbottle in this portrait, and remarkable as Le Fanu's story is, we must grant that Stevenson's is greater. For if Lord Hermiston is soaked in port and brutality he is also transfigured by authority. He is a good deal more like Justice than the detached and insipid lady with the scales. He sits before the murderer, about to deliver the sentence which will force the quarrel about Capital Punishment with his own son:

> . . . my lord Hermiston occupied the bench in the red robes of criminal jurisdiction, his face framed in the white wig. Honest all through, he did not affect the virtue of impartiality; this was no case for refinement, there was a man to be hanged, he would have said, and he was hanging him. Nor was it possible to see his lordship, and acquit him of gusto in the task. It was plain he glorified in the exercise of his trained faculties, in the clear sight which pierced at once in the joint of fact, in the rude, unvarnished jibes with which he demolished every figment of defence. He took his ease and jested, unbending in that solemn place with some of the freedom of the tavern, and the rag of man with the flannel round his neck was hunted gallowsward with jeers.

The crowd hoots Hermiston and he puts his ugly face out of the carriage window and grins at them. He is pleased. And here is a shrewd observation: his tenants are proud of him. Stevenson has struck that hidden skin of our childhood memory which quivers with pleasure as well as pain at the physical sight of authority. And later on, when Hermiston's crushed son, goes for advice to one of his father's more cultivated and sensitive fellow judges, there occur these curious lines:

> "You and he are so different," said the boy, his eyes dwelling on those of his old friend, like a lover's on his mistress.

This book has come out of the roots of Stevenson's life, and though the Lord Justice Clerk is a grotesque and heightened creation of the romantic mind, we can hear the accent of Stevenson's own father in Hermiston's bitter words to his son: "Na, there's no room for splairgers (people who splash about) under the fower quarters of John Calvin."

Stevenson has stopped "splairging"; he has reached the richest moment of life, the moment of power and judgment. He has ceased to act or to romance away from Calvinism. And none but a major writer, ripe in his experience of the dualism in human nature, could have written Stevenson's superbly riotous and sardonic account of the village tribe of Hermiston who have temporarily given up their murderous tribal strife for the pawky pleasures of religious acrimony.

The order of *Weir* is simple, rich and majestic. One wonders if Stevenson could have sustained the sonorous note. He was certainly always able to sustain an idea. *The Master of Ballantrae* does that. It is a step below *Weir*, because of the cloak and sword convention; also because of the failure to draw the woman in the book. There is a weakness too, in the fact that the Master is a wencher but is never shown wenching. We hear too much of the Master at second hand, at least until the narrator crosses to America with him. And then the wickedness of the Master is romantic wickedness, that is to say "the wicked thing" incarnate, intellectually isolated. He is the sort of human devil which could be deduced—as it was in that very remarkable Scottish book *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*—from the doctrine of Predestination. We are not, in the last resort, confronted by a human being in the Master as we are in the Lord Justice Clerk. Stevenson is still deflected by Calvinism and feyness and the Master is pretty well an evil spirit. All the same, he is a brilliant one. He is an enviable evil spirit. He is so gracefully, so inexhaustibly wicked. There is nothing so terrifying about him as the nature of his courage. It is a courage which is courageous not to the last breath, but to the last breath but one. He is really driving others to the reckless or the fatal act. He himself will rat or foul. He is thinking of the last trick, not the last stand, and his death in the American wilderness where he is dodging his murderers, is the result of miscalculation, not of defiance.

The power of this story breaks through its historical trappings. One sees the conflicts which preoccupied Stevenson most: the black and white, puritan opposition between torturer and tortured, the fulfilled man and the frustrated, the graceful man and the graceless, the man whose stoical mind is fixed on "the contemplation of what we cannot cure," and the one who takes things into his own hands and who is rewarded by nature for doing so. The Master's brother, on the other hand, is an expert, one might say, in masochism and pain. He is the hypnotised rabbit dominated by the stoat. And when he turns the tables on his persecutor after the duel, he is still the sufferer and the enslaved. He is enslaved by his insane desire for revenge. It is one of the masterly perceptions of this story, that Henry, the persecuted, is enfeebled as a character when he acts against his nature, and takes the strong course of vengeance. Our sympathies change. The Master has corrupted his slave; and has turned him into a mean and rasping plotter. The devil, by comparison, is at least debonair. He is complete. To the end he is in full possession of his diabolical faculties and refreshingly free of the Calvinist introspection.

Stevenson presented this tale of persecution and disloyalty with the spacious ingenuity of the great story teller that he was, and with a beautiful precision in the scenes. The incident of the duel by candlelight and the removal of the body by smugglers, is vivid and surprising and the choice of detail is in our highest dramatic tradition. I see still Alison's hand fly open when she touches the blood on the sword. I still see that scene in the American wilderness when the Master, failing to trick the men hired to murder him, turns over on his side by the camp fire not with fear, but with the hopelessness that temporarily sinks the spirits of the intellectual when he finds he has got to set his brain working all out again.

And then there is the account of Henry's nightmares and the state of his mind in convalescence after he thinks he has murdered his brother: they are astonishingly close to what the psychologists nowadays require. Stevenson's intuition, where illness, despair and the whole province of self-inflicted pain are concerned, is never off the mark. In its antique but narrow frame, *The Master of Ballantrae* is a psychological novel ingenious in its changes and unremitting in its power. It is an artifice, but how limpidly it runs.

V. S. Pritchett

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NEW NOVELS

Fireman Flower. By William Sansom. *Hogarth Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Robber Bridegroom. By Eudora Welty. *Bodley Head.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Lunatic Broth. By H. A. Manhood. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The greater the writer, the greater the demand on the reader. Like most generalisations, this can be quickly exploded by a multitude of noble exceptions; yet a small sediment of truth remains. More safely expressed, the greater the writer the greater his *right* to make demands. It would be an interesting, if rather fruitless speculation, to enquire whether there is any limit to the demand a writer can make, and, if so, where the limit is to be established. It would clearly be rash for an unknown poet to demand as arduous an elucidation as Mr. Eliot can both demand and receive. We would be justified in doubting whether the satisfaction would justify the effort. On the other hand, there might be so obvious, though unintelligible, a talent that we would read . . . one elucidatory book? Two? . . . but not three. The research demanded must be nicely balanced by the promise either of a respected name or of an obvious reward. Thus many intelligent and industrious readers have taken pains with *The Waste Land* and with *Ulysses*—few with Ezra Pound's *Cantos* or with *Finnegans Wake*. In the case of Pound there is too little assurance of adequate reward: in the case of *Finnegans Wake*, there is an assurance of rich reward, but too severe an effort has been demanded. This is a reflection on the leisureless condition of our lives—not on Joyce or on ourselves. I am ready to believe that *Finnegans Wake* is the greatest novel of the century—but I dare not devote three years exclusively to its elucidation. Three years are too valuable to risk on anything but a certainty.

Yet all this is the merest cynicism and resignation. A writer cannot, in practice, write *less* obscurely, simply because he suspects that his readers will take insufficient pains. He must write as he wishes, and if his work is unappreciated he can only rely on a more painstaking posterity.

For the critic obscurity is a hideous problem. There are times when he must be bold at calling bluffs—but it is wiser and nicer to err on the side of generosity. Not long ago a number of witty septuagenarians indulged in a correspondence to the *Times* on the subject of Miss Stein. Had they known it, their brilliant imitations of her manner have been one of the easiest and least reputable critical gambits for years. It was a depressing and contemptible spectacle. But the history of literary criticism is littered with the desecrated corpses of far more reputable poeticides. To have killed our Keatses can erase, for posterity, a whole life-time of caution and decency.

This over-long dissertation was occasioned more by the guilt of spending two days in the same house as a rather aggressive copy of *Finnegans Wake*, than by the writers under review. A scandalous admission, but, with one exception, the crop is a poor one. The exception is Mr. Sansom. To readers of literary periodicals he has long been known as one of the few whole-hearted disciples of Kafka now writing in English. Such a discipleship is bound to involve obscurity, though of a rather different order from Eliot's or Joyce's. It is not the obscurity of erudition, but of symbolism and allegory. For the reader this involves both advantages and disadvantages over erudite obscurity. A reference to Ovid or Laforgue can, by enquiry, be discovered, and by industry be understood. But to understand *The Castle* or *The Trial* demands a certain introspective sympathy which the reader may possess but cannot acquire.

Let us begin with Mr. Sansom's volume on the assumption that the name is a new one, and that we have read none of these stories before. The first impression, and one which survives to the end of the book, is that he writes extremely well. His style is thoughtful, versatile and free from cliché—at times a little *voulu*, at times a little lush, but a positive and excellent style of his own. This creates a most important predisposition in his favour. If he writes well we are more ready to assume that he also has something to say. The first story leaves us undecided. He has proved his acute perception and his wit, but the story itself is rather weakly anecdotal. The next story is sufficiently different to prove another quality, Mr. Sansom's versatility. It shows, too, that he has an unusual gift of pictorial description. There is some obscurity here, as there was not in the first story, but we are prepared by now to take some pains in penetrating it. And the writer has not been too parsimonious with his signposts.

The third story is one of the most ambitious in the book. Although allegorical there is hardly any obscurity here; indeed the allegory should be as clear to post-Freudian readers as was Bunyan's to his biblical readers. The inhabitants of a port were once illuminated and entranced by the multicoloured beams of a lighthouse, but for centuries the harbour-masters have persuaded the people that the lighthouse is an obscenity and to notice it a sin. A concrete screen has been erected on a cove to block the beams from the lantern, and the people now publicly execrate the lighthouse, although they still worship it in private. Two strangers heroically defy the odious convention and succeed, in spite of violent dissuasion, in reaching the lighthouse by boat. There are times when Mr. Sansom becomes almost over-explanatory; the obvious is a little too insistent. But it is a well told and well constructed narrative, genuinely a work of art and imagination.

The next two stories follow faithfully in the steps of the master. Both are excellent, obscure but not unintelligible, lucidly and freshly written. Mr. Sansom lacks his master's emotional profundity. Where Kafka wrote in symbols which expressed the deepest and most tormented regions of his own soul, his pupil's symbolism is far more directly allegorical, more external and therefore more superficial. *The Maze*, for example, expresses a social rather than an individual problem, a problem of the general human situation rather than of the particular psychological situation. We know that Kafka wrote not as a literary man, but as a tormented human being. Mr. Sansom, on the other hand, has selected Kafka's method as the one most appropriate to his literary talent. It is clear that he has chosen well, and if the result is more cerebral and less spontaneous than Kafka's, the very possibility of a comparison proves him an exceptional writer.

On the last and title story I am inclined to reserve judgment. I suspected a certain confusion in the extremely complex symbolism, but Mr. Sansom has richly earned the benefit of the doubt.

In a book of short stories which appeared in this country last year, Miss Welty showed a varied and unusual talent. Her range embraced bitter and extremely vivid sketches of middle-class life in the Southern states, and a number of more poetical and obscure fragments which seemed, at times, to verge on wooliness. In *The Robber Bridegroom* there are few signs of the astringent realist. Written in the pseudo-naive manner, this is a sort of adult fairy story, romantic, often witty, never dull. There are a succession of remarkable passages, but the final effect is somewhat irritating. It is just a little too whimsy, without being full-blooded fantasy. Treated purely as a fairy story it is a *tour de force* of considerable charm, but there is a certain *empressement* about it all which seems to suggest a more weighty purpose. This purpose has escaped me.

Lunatic Broth is a collection of gay and agreeable anecdotes about country life in England and Ireland. It is in the tradition of the Irish R.M., and sometimes attains to that level. Amiable, facile, freshly and amusingly written, the book was something of a relief. For many involuntary city-dwellers it will provide nostalgia and anticipation.

Philip Toynbee

THE MACHIAVELLIAN TRADITION

The Machiavellians. By James Burnham. *Putnam.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Burnham has now implemented his book on *The Managerial Revolution* with an analysis of those political thinkers whom he would probably be prepared to regard as his worthy predecessors: Machiavelli, Mosca, Georges Sorel, Michels, and Vilfredo Pareto. The one or two temporary Civil Servants whose small chests grew visibly broader since Mr. Burnham told them that *they* are the rulers of to-morrow and not insignificant spinners of superfluous memoranda, may now even claim to be the direct successors of the men whose names we just mentioned.

Mr. Burnham's new book is not a history of the Machiavellian tradition, but rather a loose series of essays or better, perhaps, commentaries on some books by Mosca, Sorel, Michels, and Pareto, judged against the background of the essence of Machiavelli's political thought. Mr. Burnham introduces his exposition of Machiavelli's doctrines after having devoted an introductory chapter to a discussion of Dante's *De Monarchia*. To blame Dante for Utopianism and wishful thinking as compared with Machiavelli is easy, particularly if one discounts the small fact that Machiavelli is separated from Dante by only 200 years. A world separated these two thinkers: the *weltanschauung* of the late Middle Ages cannot be measured with the new scientific norms of the Renaissance Age. Mr. Burnham's essay on Machiavelli is a useful reminder for the uninitiated though he would do better to read Benoist, Acton, Meinecke or the more recent admirable study of Machiavelli's Statecraft by Mr. H. Butterfield.

The essay on Mosca's work *The Ruling Class* is a good summary of this illuminating book. Hardly more. Mr. Burnham proceeds then to a discussion of Georges Sorel's idea of the myth, its function and its significance in the social process. I do not think he has understood the "rational" character of Sorel's conception of the myth, as he bases his analysis on Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*, which represent only a phase in Sorel's very complex political thought. Before Mr. Burnham deals with Pareto's sociology, a chapter which may serve a reader as an able and convenient introduction to this author's formidable *Mind and Society*, we are presented with an (inadequate) summary of Robert Michels' book on the *Sociology of Political Parties*, a book which, if I am not mistaken, has for many years been out of print, and which the Penguin or Everyman Series would do well to make available to students of politics.

Now what is the doctrine of these "Machiavellians"? Mr. Burnham suggests thirteen principles, which the reader will find on pp. 164 *seq*.

(1) There is an objective science of politics and of society comparable to the other empirical sciences. (2) The primary object of this science of politics is according to the Machiavellians the struggle for social power in all its forms. (3) Political science cannot take men's words and beliefs at their face value. (4) Logical or rational action plays a much smaller part in social life than non-logical action. (5) Political science must regard the social division between rulers and ruled, or between the élite and the non-élite as the most important social division. (6) The circulation of the élites is consequently a primary object of the student of politics. (7) All élites are out to maintain their own power and privilege. (8) The rule of the élite is based upon force and fraud. (9) "The social structure as a whole is integrated and sustained by a political formula, which is usually correlated with a generally accepted religion, ideology or myth." (10) The rule of the élite will coincide, sometimes more, sometimes less, with the interests of the masses, the non-élite. (11) Two tendencies operate within every élite: an aristocratic tendency which closes its ranks and a democratic tendency "whereby new elements force their way into the

élite from below." (12) Ultimately this second tendency prevails in the social process. (13) "There occur periodically very rapid shifts in the composition and structure of élites ; that is social revolution."

These principles are a rough summary of what Mr. Burnham terms the "Machiavellian tradition." No serious student of politics should take this challenge of the traditional democratic philosophy lightheartedly. One must be grateful to Mr. Burnham for presenting us with such an impressive synthesis of practically all ideas for whose destruction we fight a second world war.

Democracy in Lincoln's sense is according to this book a lie and a fake. Great Britain and the United States are fast moving towards a plebiscitary State structure ! It is difficult to see, if one would follow Mr. Burnham, why Hitler was not asked to attend the Teheran conference. I suppose Mr. Burnham has never had the opportunity of observing English "local government" at work. Nor does he seem to be more familiar with the checks and balances which the American Constitution provides. His ideas are conceived at the writing-desk, nourished by books and removed from reality. That is why some of our intellectuals are so fascinated by Mr. Burnham's pseudo-realism.

Yet he claims to be a "defender of freedom." "Liberty is preserved by those who are against the existing chief power. . . . Political freedom is the resultant of unresolved conflicts among various sections of the élite." The people, the masses never count, except perhaps as a reservoir to produce a newcomer to the élite.

It is difficult to define what freedom is. Those who have lost it perhaps know it best. They would waste no time in arguing with Mr. Burnham.

J. P. MAYER

FATHER OF THE MAN

The **Young Lincoln.** By ESTHER MEYNELL. *Chapman and Hall.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

For those who have wondered how a rough, gawky and uncouth man like Abraham Lincoln could rise to be President of the United States and one of the great figures of world history, *The Young Lincoln* will be instructive reading. Mrs. Meynell has set down with a somewhat frightening ruthlessness all the virtues and vices she could discover about him from a thorough reading of every available biography, carefully dimmed down any other people who happened to appear in the events and anecdotes, and has left us a picture of Abe's early days that is both readable and irritating.

His early environment was important. His father came from a line of pioneers and was no great credit to them. Always moving from place to place, leaving a bad home only to find a worse, he had little sympathy for the desire for knowledge that his only son manifested. When he found young Abe making speeches to a clump of trees he had little hesitation is using his strong right arm in the approved style. His mother was a pale, silent woman who may or may not have been illiterate—in any event, she never signed her name, "making her mark" instead. Mrs. Meynell is entitled to our gratitude for having undertaken the task of sifting the material. Unfortunately the result is less satisfactory than it could have been. The reasons are several. To begin with, Mrs. Meynell has conceived a great dislike of Dennis Hanks, his mother's cousin, who lived with young Lincoln for many years. Hanks—a poor speller, it must be admitted—has nevertheless recorded detailed impressions of the future President and the influences that affected his early life. However, the lack of euphony in his name appears to have turned the sensitive Mrs. Meynell against him ; she admits this desire for euphony in a revealing passage :

> There is something almost funny in the curious ugliness of the names of places and people belonging to Lincoln's early days. The names of towns like Hodgenville and Gentryville are lacking in loveliness, as is Pappsville, the name of the place where he was to make his first speech. One of his school-teachers was called Azel Horsey, and one of his early associates bore the name of Offut—the list could be lengthened considerably.

It is from just this rawness which she goes on to deplore that she could have drawn her first major inference. It is certain that this quality, which persisted long after his entry into the pompous plushness of the White House, served to keep Lincoln the man of the people that he was. Nor is enough made of the personality of his stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston. It was she who encouraged the scholar in the ten-year-old boy, she who watered the bud of kindness, she who brought "luxury" into the barren life of young Abe.

One is left with the feeling that *The Young Lincoln* is altogether too casual a book. The best part is the later period which covers the time he entered Springfield society up to the year of his marriage. The three love-affairs are sensitively told and the anecdotes carefully chosen. The best is about the prayer-meeting. "All who want to go to Heaven, stand up," called the preacher at the end of the evening. One or two people obliged. "Now stand up those of you who don't want to go to Hell." Everyone was then standing except the gaunt young lawyer. The preacher asked where he thought he was going. Slowly came the answer from Abraham Lincoln : "I am going to Congress."

The reader is left with the impression that the surface of the subject has been little more than scratched ; the narrative shifts from scene to scene and back again without any real pattern being formed. Dates are sometimes noted and sometimes not, Lincoln's age at various parts of the book is rarely given and the constant repetition of the same trifling remarks is tiring. For all these faults *The Young Lincoln* escapes many faults that a less experienced writer might have made, and holds the attention.

ELKAN ALLAN

APPROACH TO JOYCE

James Joyce : A Critical Introduction. By HARRY LEVIN. *Faber & Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Desmond MacCarthy remarked recently that he had noticed a falling-off in enthusiasm for Joyce. He did not say it—though others have—in the tone with which Johnson uttered a good-bye to *Tristram Shandy*—people won't be bothered, you see ! Possibly they won't, and *Ulysses* will vanish ; though, if one looks round, there are few other books to-day that look as strangely durable. After twenty-two years it hasn't changed, this monolith of a day built up in exile ; the same singular feeling and skill confront the eye. Fewer visitors ? That was to be expected. Fashions come and go, and it is possible to mistake the fashion for the thing it has fastened upon. The first taste for Joyce is going, no doubt has already gone : so much the better. But Joyce with all his virtues and defects, remains ; literature (whatever his opponents may say) has digested *Ulysses* and is still busy digesting *Finnegan's Wake.* And at this date, it seems to me, there is no question of a summary Either-Or : you don't either reject or swallow whole, Joyce isn't either this or that, a quack, the greatest writer of his time. He has genius ; he has limitations. He has, isolated though he may appear, a lineage.

That criticism has got a second wind is proved by the appearance, in the middle of a world war, of Mr. Levin's critical essay. It is the best

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introduction to Joyce that has yet been published: both learned and enlightening, sympathetic and critical—a combination of qualities by no means usual in those who approach this writer. Never was there a subject in which it was so easy to miss the wood for the trees, and we must be grateful to Mr. Levin for having provided a clear perspective that takes in everything. He begins, roughly, where Mr. Edmund Wilson in *Axel's Castle* left off, with the parallel streams of naturalism and symbolism converging to produce a literature that could be rich and copious and yet deal with reality. In his earliest writing the gap between verbal magic and actuality—the word "Araby," for example, entrancing a Dublin child—caused Joyce a sort of anguish and his whole literary struggle was towards a subject-matter and a treatment that would reconcile the word with the thing represented. Joyce brought this about, but at a cost and with increasing strain; the talismanic virtue of words in *Ulysses* and far more in *Finnegans Wake*, must always be less for the reader than it was for Joyce himself. To that extent he fails, and the work of his final period, once its experimental force has slackened, will probably survive only in a limbo with Blake's prophetic books and Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror*. That is no reason why it should be condemned now: a good point, indeed, about Mr. Levin is that, while admitting the experimental nature of *Finnegans Wake*, he enjoys this cryptic release of Joyce's exuberance and helps us materially to understand it.

As criticism goes, Mr. Levin's, I should point out, is fairly stiff, but it isn't desiccated. He has managed to see his subject in the round—Joyce himself, saintly and somewhat repellent, his conflicts, his theories, his silence and mania for words; the life and the writings are made to converge, and this is no small feat. It was obviously an extremely difficult book to write, and it isn't an easy one to review; partly because a good deal of what Mr. Levin says has been said before, but also because the subject itself is tricky. Mr. Levin makes no startling discoveries or reversals of judgment; instead, he adjusts nicely, taking away a little here, adding a little there. Good point, one thinks, when he stresses the early influence of Pater, or quotes a letter from Joyce to his publisher—"I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the *centre of paralysis*." The good points add up, and when one comes to the end of this book of 150 pages, it is with the feeling that there is not a great deal more, for the moment, to be said.

Armed with this introduction and the selection from Joyce made by Mr. T. S. Eliot (Faber, 3s. 6d.) I don't see how any reader could go wrong. He might, of course, decide to go no further, but that is another matter.

G. W. STONIER

AFRICAN EDUCATION

Mass Education in Africa. Colonial Office White Paper No. 186. *H.M.S.O.* 1*s.*

Winston Churchill marked his coming to power by commanding Government officials to write their memoranda in plain English. The Civil Service showed its independent spirit by continuing to write officialese. This report is an awful example of that illiterate style. Written in good English, it would save masses of paper, and would be far more widely read. Why should an essay on education, of all things, be guilty of sentences like this?

> One effect of this unity of plan is that the fading out of which we have spoken will only be effectively lessened or avoided by co-ordination or unification of plan, so that continuity is secured from school to the post-school years.

Decoded: "Education should continue through childhood and youth, or it will be forgotten." However, this blemish apart, this is an important report, and a good one. The reasons for introducing mass education in Africa are fairly given; and the results of the policy in China, Soviet Russia and the Southern States of the United States are adduced, although not, unfortunately, in detail enough to convey any idea of their degree of success. The report insists that education must be general, that is, it must be given to adults as well as to children. It must be based upon literacy, and on reading and writing in the mother-tongues of the people. The language difficulty and the lack of books in the African languages are considered, but they are rightly held less of an obstacle than teaching people in a tongue strange to them. The report adopts the opposite line, of saying that books must be printed in the native tongues, at first translations, but soon, if writing is encouraged, books written by Africans. Newspapers are a stage to this, and they flourish already in some parts of Africa. The uses of the radio and the film are sensibly discussed. The writers point out that it is no good offering nothing but instructive broadcasting; indeed, they are rational all through about the relation of education to pleasure, although they rather underestimate the value of indigenous art. Their second principle is that reading and writing, in the minds of the people, must represent the means to improving their lives. Thus the report is sure that in many regions the right method is to take a community, a village or a plantation, or a mine, and to enlist the people in an effort to better their health, housing, their skill in industry or farming, by means of education. It believes, too, that it is right to begin with samples, live and intelligent communities whose example will spread, and which can be used to train teachers for other places. It is a pity that none of the experiments of this sort such as the Jamaica 4 H clubs is described. Mass education, even if officials and voluntary agencies like missions and trade unions help, will depend mainly on the Africans themselves. Certainly their conditions offer plenty of room for social improvement, and it is fortunate that they show every sign of eagerness for the education without which they cannot make progress in an increasingly complicated world. It must be hoped that the Government means to implement the policy of this report as soon as we can spare enough trained people to begin it, and that it will take immediate steps to prepare for its large-scale execution after the war.

FREDA WHITE

Be Your Own Brains Trust. By "DEMOCRAT." *Hutchinson.* 5*s.*

The World We Mean to Make. By MAXWELL GARNETT. *Faber and Faber.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Since the beginning of this war there has been a new and widespread interest in the Discussion Group. All over the country thousands of little clusters of people are now chewing over the political, social and cultural problems that were discovered by an awakened interest. Some groups are in barracks or billet, others in warden's post or fire-station, while others—the majority—are formed round the nucleus of two or three informed people who would be arguing anyway and are willing to do it in public. Books and book-shops are closely allied to these latter groups and in many cases—such as the Handel Smithy in Edgware—they have been formed by the owners themselves. *Be Your Own Brains Trust* contains a very useful appendix on the formation and running of a Group and should be popular with secretaries and chairmen. What appeal it will hold for the ordinary reader is harder to assess. It takes four topics, Demobilisation, Planning, Security and Education, and records the arguments that four men of varying political opinions are supposed to have about them. Unfortunately, these rarely ring true and the sickening regularity of compromise which

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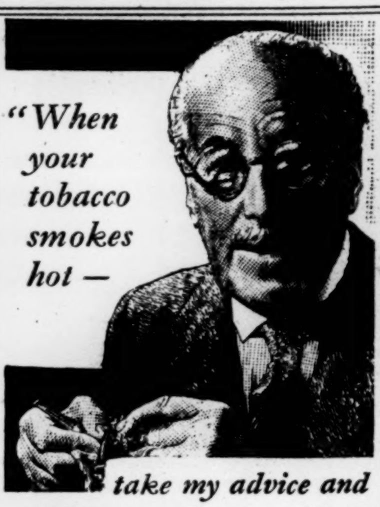
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rings each chapter to a close is about as unlike a real Group as anything could be.

Discussion Groups are not mentioned by Dr. Garnett in his new work, although a reference would ertainly have not been out of place. However, *The World We Mean to Make* deals exhaustively with most facets of Education and should prove a aluable addition to its literature. It is in four parts of which the most interesting is "The Good Citizen"; he most illuminating is "The Political Background"; he most contentious is "The Training of Good Citizens"; and the most constructive is "A Plan or England." Throughout emphasis is laid on the act that the citizen of the future must put global oyalties before patriotism and collective well-being efore his own. As a basis Dr. Garnett insists on The Commonwealth, a sort of Federal Union of the United Nations. This, it seems, is to have Christ-anity as its driving force—with the consent of the U.S.S.R., we presume?

Although this central scheme raises doubt there will be complete agreement on the fact that Dr. Garnett has made a useful contribution to the Discussion Group leader who wishes to instruct on Education. The statistics and annotated notes are opious and clear, while the appendices on American, Nazi and English school systems are worth long tudy.

Week-end Competitions

No. 733

Set by Raymond Mortimer

Competitors are invited to write 14 lines about ats, flowers or musical instruments with triple hymes like those in Hood's *Nocturnal Sketch*. Here re the first 5 lines of the model:

> Even is come; and from the dark Park, hark,
> The signal of the setting sun—one gun!
> And six is sounding from the chime, prime time
> To go and see the Drury-Lane Dane slain,—
> Or hear Othello's jealous doubt spout out,—

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, February 28th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 730

Set by William Whitebait

A nice touch in *The Waste Land*—that poem of so many echoes—is provided by this variation of Goldsmith:

> When lovely woman stoops to folly and
> Paces about the room again alone,
> She pats her hair with automatic hand
> And puts a record on the gramophone.

Competitors are asked to try their hands on similar modulations, ironic or serious, from well-known beginnings. Since this is sacrilege, the nicest taste should be observed; pompous or rather faded originals are probably the best to choose. Limit, 12 lines.

Report by William Whitebait

This was an exceedingly difficult competition, despite obvious temptations, and I am not surprised that out of a very large entry comparatively few should have succeeded. The temptation, of course, was to be facetious and nothing more; that wasn't difficult.

> When I consider how my life is spent
> Between the kitchen, and the scullery sink,
> With washing up and making tea to drink . . .
> (MRS FRANK JEWSON)

> I met a little Cottage girl
> She said, "I'm seven plus
> And soon I'll go to school in Town
> Each morning on the bus." . . .
> (M. E. WESTON)

> She dwelt among the untrodden ways of an
> enormous Airport Station. . . . (D. D. R.)

What one misses here is even a touch of the higher levity conveyed by the Eliot quotation. And the sort of line that rather asked for it—"Pale hands, beside the Shalimar" and "Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever"—wasn't more productive. Not only wit, but the smoothest form of wit, sliding away with frictionless ease, was needed. "Little Billee" almost brought off a *Tiger, tiger* in terms of Freudian analysis:

> Tiger, tiger, burning bright
> Lord of my private jungle Id,
> Snarling with your striped delight
> At the young devilries I did. . . .

And the tiger is tamed and tamed till he becomes a shabby cat, lying about the house. Unfortunately, though, the Freudian terms aren't quite right: the Id of line two should be the tiger and not the jungle. I'm afraid "Little Billee" must be ruled out.

There were some gallant attempts at serious modulation. Lyly's delightful conceit tempted one competitor:

> Cupid and my Campaspe played
> At cards for kisses. Cupid paid. . . .
> (CAPT. J. R. H. YEOMAN)

So far, so good; and the new conceit—that the lady cheated and trumped Cupid's ace—was charming; the only thing necessary was to embody this witticism in verse, which would require very great skill indeed. The rest of Capt. Yeoman's poem looks, and was bound to look, clumsy.

Among the runners-up E. M., G. T., Nancy Gunter, and Pad deserve a special mention. There is little to choose between the winners, and I suggest that prizes be divided equally between R. H., I. C. Saul and F. C. C.

PRIZES

POOR TOM

> My mind to me a Kingdom is or was
> Till my five wits, the commons of my state,
> Misliking me and my tyrannic laws,
> Called on their King to abdicate.
> R. H.

FRAGMENTS FROM THE FREUDIAN AND SIR GALAHAD

> "My strength is as the strength of ten
> Because my heart is pure."
> "I wonder," said the Analyst;
> "Since Freud we're not so sure.
> In fact, sir, I suspect that you
> Are rather immature. . . ."
>
> "I never felt the kiss of love,
> Nor maiden's hand in mine."
> "A Girl you need, sir, not the Grail—
> Go, drink Love's heady wine.
> Before the Id blows off the lid,
> Get wife—or concubine. . . ."

(With apologies to Tennyson and acknowledgments to Lewis Carroll.)

(I. C SAUL)

TO HIS MISTRESS IN TIME OF WAR

> When as in silk my Julia goes
> Then, then methinks, how sadly shows
> The imperfection of her hose!
> (F. C. C.)

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